

LOUISA MATHEWS.

BY

AN EMINENT LADY.

“ The broadest mirth unfeeling Folly wears,
“ Less pleasing far than Virtue’s very tears.”

POPE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. LACKINGTON, No. 46 & 47,
Chiswell-street, Finsbury-square, Moorfields.

1793.

17408.59.75
Harvard College Library

Mar. 15, 1921

G. F. Parkman fund

(3 vols)

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P R E F A C E.

IN these days of elegant refinement, when the successful attempts of the Novelist are attended with the substantial rewards of profit and praise, it becomes not the inclination, but the duty of the writer, to disseminate principles, which may promote the love and admiration of virtue; the abhorrence and detestation of vice in the bosom of the reader. The fashionable part of the world find little leisure for more serious pursuits than the agreeable fictions the Novelist yields them. The General—the Admiral—the Bishop, and the Judge, devote their hours of relaxation to Cicilia, to Ethelinda,

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and the Romance of the Forest, with several others of like estimation. The fond parent no longer hesitates about his daughter's reading our modern productions, for tho' the story may often be ill conceived, yet it is certain to convey an excellent moral; disobedience is always secure of meeting its punishment, even *here*, and suffering virtue is assured of a compensation for and happy termination of her sorrows. I should prepossess my readers with a truth, which will lead them through these pages with a larger portion of pleasure than would otherwise fall to their share, by assuring them that Louisa Mathews, though a *fictitious* name, is a *real* character. I know
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many people are well acquainted with the principal part of her story, but of her innate virtues, the world is still ignorant. Criminal should I think myself to withhold her perfect example from the young, the gay, and uninstructed part of my sex, when I am persuaded it will lead even the thoughtless to perceive that integrity of heart,—justness of action,—unrepining submission,—mental exertions to bear up under unmerited persecutions, and a firm unshaken reliance on God, will procure that peace, “which passeth all understanding.” Be assured, my reader, that if your mind is free from the corrosive poison of self-reproach, you are an enviable being, altho’ afflicted with
pecuniary

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pecuniary distresses. Self-condemnation renders every external advantage of fortune, beauty, elevated situation, and admiration,—tasteless and insipid. However, we may disguise it to the world, with affecting cheerfulness and satisfaction, we cannot deceive ourselves.

My friends, I place this work in your hands, in the earnest hope that it may afford you some little portion of that pleasure on perusal, that I have had in writing it. According to the reception you give it, my hours may be employed by my pen, or on less attractive pursuits.

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LOUISA MATHEWS.

CHAP. I.

LOUISA MATHEWS was the daughter of a clergyman, who was born to an exceeding good family estate, which was wholly lost in the Rebellion, at a time when his son was just entering upon life in a manner that promised him success in the law, which profession he was originally designed for. His talents were of that brilliant cast so peculiarly requisite in

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this walk; and he had anticipated, with exultation, that hour when he should first give his friends a specimen of his knowledge in the laws of his country: but, just as the blossom of this hope was ripening into fruit, the father's attachment to the Pretender involved him and his family in the general ruin attending the cause. The old man's reflections, after a while, deprived him of his senses; and his son, blighted by the keen blast, withered in solitude and obscurity. His uncle, a most rigid presbyterian, received him, however, under his roof: and, telling him his determination not to consider a nephew of his wife's as his heir, *unless* he gave up all thoughts of the law, and entered

entered into the church, he acquiesced with the proposal; being so truly dispirited, from the cruel change in his prospects, that life was almost indifferent to him.

The parsimony of his uncle, however, deprived him of the advantages he might have obtained from a residence at one of the Universities. As soon as he had taken his Master of Arts degree, he was summoned by his relation into the north; where he remained several years, at his uncle's command, to do duty at the kirk. Afflicted with broken spirits, and a shattered constitution, from the disappointments he had encountered at so early a period, he made no opposition

sition whatever; but, neglectful of his future prospects, yielded himself up to a listless despair, which appeared to be habitual to him.

The death of his uncle, and bequest of his property, which was above mediocrity, to the nephew of his wife, occasioned this injured young man to travel to London, and to try to obtain a decent support from performing occasional duty at various churches: this endeavour was attended with success; and his spirits gradually became better, from the employment these pursuits necessarily occasioned him. In this manner did he pass his life, till he reached his thirty-sixth year: when, preaching at St. James's, Clerkenwell,

well, for the clergyman, who was suddenly taken ill, he made such an impression upon a handsome young widow, that she enquired his name; and, learning that it was the same as her maiden one, she concluded it might be her cousin, who had resided so many years with her father in the north, when she was with her husband in the West Indies. She desired a lady who was with her to enter the vestry, and enquire whether the preacher was nephew to the Reverend Mr. Mathews, of Kinlock Glen; if he was, to bring him to the carriage, in which she would wait at the church-door. As he proved to be the identical cousin she had heard so much about from her father's letters, she felt a de-

gree of pleasure in shewing him some attentions, since her parent had behaved so ungenerously to him, in deceiving him with false hopes of possessing his fortune.

Mr. Mathews was grateful to Providence for an event which had created an interest for him in the breast of a beautiful widow of five and twenty, with a jointure of twelve hundred a year: in short, the lost animation returned. If he was charmed with his newly-discovered cousin, she was not less so with him. The natural connexion authorized frequent visits; and, as Mrs. Proby pitied him for his sufferings, without disguise, he was led to tell her, she could more than recompence

compence any worldly misfortune by becoming his wife. She acknowledged, that she had designedly spoken plain, as she perceived his unprovided situation made him injure her with doubts of what her reply *might* be: and, after six months courtship, which was the fifteenth of her widowhood, she became his wife. What an atonement was this amiable woman to her husband, for all the malice fortune had exercised against him! They really asked not a new blessing. Mrs. Mathews had never had any family; and, possessing only a jointure, which died with her, she did not wish for children she could not provide for. Ten years rolled over their heads, with an inexpressible

swiftness, because they were as amiable as happy, when Mrs. Mathews promised to increase her family: an event which, when it did come, was attended in idea with extreme pleasure, but in reality with excess of pain; for the birth of the infant Louisa proved the death of her inestimable mother.

The inconsolable husband, rendered unable, through grief, to attend to the pursuits he had formerly followed, yielded himself up to an unavailing sorrow; which not only destroyed his health, but dissipated the little treasure he had amassed from his wife's annual income.

At length, he began to perceive the pernicious effects of this fatal indulgence; and,

and, reflecting on the forlorn and unprovided situation of his dear little girl, he roused himself from the lethargic supineness which had so truly engrossed him, and resolved to seek after immediate preferment, without loss of time; which he flattered himself would be no difficult thing to obtain, since the stile he had lived in had brought many dignitaries in the church, and people who had great interest also with them, to be constant frequenters of his excellent table. With these hopes did he suffer three years more to pass over his head, before he discovered that the promises of great people are unsubstantial, airy nothing !

CHAP. II.

TRULY mortifying as this conviction was, he was under the necessity of humbling himself farther, by becoming the tutor of a young gentleman, a minor Baronet, of amiable disposition; whose mother was the intimate friend of his loved wife, and godmother to Louisa. But after a wretched servitude, I may call it, for five years, with a purse-proud, unfeeling woman, he was discharged at a moment's warning.

Upon his entering on this situation, he had consigned the care of his infant daughter to a very worthy woman,
who

who had formerly been governess to several young women of fashion. Ill health obliged her to give up the task, and to live entirely in the country, upon a little annuity she had purchased with the produce of her labours. A more advantageous place for this child to be placed at was impossible. Mrs. Goodricke was about forty, of very elegant manners, and extremely accomplished from her former situation in life; which acquirements were imparted to Louisa Mathews, with all the zeal that friendship for her mother, and commiseration for her father, could inspire.

So thoroughly satisfied was Mr. Mathews with the manner in which he had placed out his child, that it

atoned in his mind for the feverities of fortune to himself: he was convinced that the education Mrs. Goodricke could give her, would be a future provision, if he was unable to lay by any thing for her; and he saw, that nature had been kind in bestowing a person capable of making a favourable impression upon those who might in future become her friends. "A little," said he, "is enough to procure a good heart contentment. It depends upon ourselves to be happy in a great measure; and, if Louisa is not so with a competence, she will not be so with affluence." His plan was, to save up sufficient to place her as partner in a ladies boarding-school, provided he could live

live under the same roof. But, at her early years, no step seemed decisive with him, except that of immediately procuring himself employment, to obtain a provision for himself, and a little hoard for the beloved child of an almost adored wife, whom he yet lamented with a grief scarcely less poignant than at the moment when the misfortune happened to him.

After advertizing for some weeks, for the place of tutor to one or two gentlemen, he obtained a very desirable situation, in the family of Mr. Montague, as governor of his sons. A very little time convinced him, that he was peculiarly fortunate in having procured this office; as a more estimable character, in every relative situation

tion of life, never existed. This rendered Mr. Montague beloved and esteemed by the world, and almost idolized by his children and domestics: his penetration soon led him to discover the intrinsic worth of Mr. Mathews, and to put forth every encouragement in his power to bestow. That his sons might reap the advantages arising from the instruction a mind at ease can communicate, every attention and respect was paid to the tutor by himself, and consequently by the whole family. This handsome, liberal, and generous method of conduct in Mr. Montague, was repaid by the warm zeal and devotion with which Mr. Mathews discharged his trust. The two boys made

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an astonishing progress in their studies; and the three young ladies learned, from the same indefatigable instructor, French, Italian, Geography, and several other valuable additions to education. His manners were so prepossessing, that every body felt an inclination to oblige him; and therefore it is almost unnecessary to add, that he really enjoyed his existence in a manner he had not done since the death of his wife.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THE two young men were of very different dispositions, though equally quick and promising in the pursuit of their studies. George was of a most sanguine turn: every thing he *wished* to accomplish, he imagined was *already effected*; and consequently he created himself many disappointments; but, when these disappointments did arrive, he bore them with all the fortitude of the Stoic philosophy. He was courageous, just, generous, and sincere, on every occasion: from his childhood, incapable of art, whatever advantage might arise from it; ardent in his friendships, and
disinterested;

disinterested; in his nature, dutiful and affectionate. William was bold, fiery, and impatient in his temper, with a great share of good nature; precipitate and irresolute in all his undertakings: unsettled in his principles, the best resolutions in the world gave way to the most insignificant temptations; artful, where his interest was concerned; close and reserved in his friendships; with one fatal propensity inherent in his nature, a love of gaming. A top, a pair of buckles, or gloves, were sure of being immediately risked by the toss up of a halfpenny, or cut of a card; the premature skip of a flea from his wrist, before his grandfather's gold repeater struck six, lost him a watch he had
only

only possessed for a week ; and, after undergoing some punishment and disgrace, he lost the seals to a young friend, with whom he betted, that a spider, which he had fattened for the whole month, should run a race with any other his opponent would start. Repetitions of these follies, made Mr. Montague very uneasy, and always anxious upon William's account, who constantly professed sorrow for the past transgression, and promised an observance of his father's commands in future. But, during three years residence at Oxford, Mr. Mathews discovered the improbability of breaking him of this pernicious vice. At twenty-one, Mr. Montague imagined his eldest son

son capable of reaping much information from travelling with such an observing guide as Mr. Mathews; since a very recent folly of William's made the father anxious to break a connexion which he had formed with a very artful and designing set of young men, who found that his father supplied him liberally for his amusements; and, notwithstanding his declaration that he would not discharge any gaming debts, had actually twice cleared those scores of honour, to a very large amount, for his son.

Upon the discovery of this unpromising connexion, he wrote to his sons, and their tutor, to take leave of the University, and prepare themselves for the

the grand tour they had so often expressed the hope of taking; and, wishing that no time should be lost between their knowledge of his intention and the accomplishment of it, he desired them to come to town as soon as they could effect it.

George and William received extreme satisfaction from the likelihood of putting their favourite scheme in execution: and the former was as much elated with the idea that Mathews, who had already been abroad, was to accompany them, as William was mortified; for he had made an acquaintance with a young clergyman at Oxford, who was very anxious to supply Mr. Mathews's place upon this expedition.

William

William had hoped that old Mathews would prefer England to any other situation, as he had often heard him speak of a daughter with extreme affection, who had never been seen by any of the Montague family: but the pleasure his tutor expressed on the subject of their future destination, dashed all the hopes he had formed of being more at liberty.

When the trio arrived in Cavendish Square, Mr. Mathews found a letter, which had lain there for him some days, from Mrs. Goodricke, who had the care of his daughter; acquainting him with her thorough persuasion that she should not long survive a second paralytic stroke, which had quite

quite deprived her of the use of her left-arm; and advising him, by all means, to remove his lovely daughter, and place her in a proper situation; as his doing so, would make her mind easy on the dear child's account, and preserve her from witnessing scenes painful to her sensibility, and performing mournful offices which would effectually depress her spirits. Mathews concealed this letter from Mr. Montague for that day; but, on the morrow, he disclosed it's contents to him, and lamented that this new unforeseen circumstance would compel him to remain in England, as his daughter's youth, and unprovided situation, required his personal protection. He joined with
Mr.

Mr. Montague very sincerely in lamenting the disappointment they alike received.

The old man had all along indulged the idea, that, whenever his sons did travel, Mr. Mathews would attend them; and therefore he received excessive mortification at this recent change in his plan. After a little previous silence, he proposed to Mr. Mathews to place out his daughter, as a half-boarder, at some respectable school, where she would be well taken care of for a trifling sum; and, as two or three years at farthest would separate him from her, she would possibly make such a progress in her education, (which he imagined, from her present situation,

situation, had not been much improved) as to be able to take a part in a school herself at some future period.

“ I should have been, Sir,” said Mathews, rather abruptly, “ very deficient in my duty as a father, if I had neglected the most material care a parent can bestow upon a child. Louisa has not been neglected, though she has been secluded.”

“ For God’s sake,” replied Mr. Montague, “ let us devise something to obviate the present difficulty. I cannot express the mortification I shall feel at your desertion of my sons, at so interesting a period. I should never have planned this scheme, but from the idea that you would (accompany them.)

William

William requires the rein to be held rather tightly : you have great weight with him ; but he would go to wreck and ruin, if a young man, of little more experience than himself, was set over his head. Come, come, we must not, at our days, Mathews, suffer a girl to make a difference between us."

" Not a difference, I trust," he replied ; " but, I fear, an unavoidable separation, which I regret the necessity of. Be assured, dear Sir, the disappointment to me is equally severe."—" You please me, my friend," said Montague. " Hear my proposition, Mr. Mathews: if you will place your daughter at a boarding-school, in order to train her up for the conduct of such an un-

dertaking herself, I will willingly contribute fifteen or twenty pounds a year for this purpose, as the earnest of my promise to lend her five hundred pounds, *without a bond*, the instant you think her capable of setting forward upon her own account—let her pay me when she is rich.”

“ I am at a loss,” replied Mr. Mathews, “ how to thank you, Sir, for your benevolent offer, or yet to give you my answer to it. As you are the father of three charming young women yourself, you will be able to enter into my feelings. You already know that I *have* a daughter, but you are ignorant of any thing relative to her. She is, without parental partiality, the

the most lovely creature your fancy can form. Too well acquainted with the dangers attending beauty, I have hitherto secluded her, in a very small village, with a clergyman's widow, who was in early life governess to several young women of fashion; so that her manners and instruction have been bestowed on my child with the three and twenty guineas I annually paid her. I dare not place her in other hands, without my own superintending care. I believe she is all that my fondest wishes could desire; but, at eighteen, without a knowledge of the world, I should dread lest her very virtues might lead her into errors. There are, doubtless, many worthy wo-

men who have the care of boarding-schools; but, unfortunately, I am not acquainted with them, and I dare not make the experiment."

"If that is your only difficulty," said Montague, "I will remove it; for I know a most inestimable woman who keeps a great school, and I am certain will receive her as a half-boarder.— Surely, Mathews, you might club another twenty pounds; for I will give that sum, and place her as parlour boarder."

"True, Sir; but it is not the sum which would distress me, but the situation. Let me repeat, that she is exquisitely beautiful: as a half-boarder, she would have some unpleasant offices to perform;

perform; as a parlour boarder, she would not only have the society of the mistress, but also of all the mistress's friends. Among these, there may be some one to admire Louisa, who may have a specious appearance, and yet be destitute of worth. Without a guide, she may listen to an amiable man, who has not the means of supporting her. In short, I cannot positively reply to your kindness, till I have turned the subject over in my own mind."

"I wish you to do so, Mr. Mathews: only remember, I will endeavour to make every thing easy on *my* part—difference about money shall not divide us. I know no man who would be a desirable substitute for you: my lads

are attached to you; and I look upon a good understanding between pupil and master to be of the utmost consequence. I believe, it is a short point which they love best; but I am persuaded your opinion has often more weight with them than mine: which is a consolation to me I cannot describe; as, should any thing happen to me, I am certain they would still have a fatherly friend, who has an attachment to them.” —“ Indeed, Sir, you do me but justice; but may Heaven, for their sakes, long spare you to them!” said Mathews. “ I will see my daughter and Mrs. Goodricke to-morrow; and, at my return, I shall be able to speak

“speak more decidedly upon the subject.”

“One thing, Mr. Mathews, allow me to remark to you: your daughter’s beauty is much more dangerous in seclusion than in the world. The first man who is civil to a country girl steals her heart—where there are many, she stands a better chance of selecting a proper one. You know, no man of common foresight marries without a fortune: this is an absolute necessity, which cannot be dispensed with, particularly in a beauty; for beauties have airs and caprices to gratify which dive deep into moderate purses.”

“I trust, my girl,” rejoined Mathews, “will be an exception to your

rule; but, till I revolve all you have said a little more in my mind, I dare not give you hope that I can leave Louisa."

They parted till dinner: when Mr. Montague seemed in wonderful spirits; and told him Eliza had, he believed, solved all difficulties upon the subject of the morning. "She has proposed, that Miss Mathews should take up her abode here. My daughter's health is so delicate, she cannot racket about with Lucy and Charlotte; and she, consequently, spends many an evening alone. What a desirable acquisition would it be to both our girls to become the friend of each other! I am persuaded you will allow all difficulties are now done away."

"Indeed,"

“ Indeed,” he replied, “ I believe they are : but, as I never decide for my girl, till I know the bent of her inclinations, I can only say, I trust she will enjoy from the reality, what I now do from the idea.”

George, but not William, was in great hopes that all would be settled to his tutor's wish. They had frequently witnessed him to share many anxieties upon his daughter's account, whom they naturally supposed to be a mere country girl, from knowing she lived with the poor widow of a clergyman, on a very scanty allowance. Their sisters had often asked Mr. Mathews to bring her to town for a week ; which he, however, always declined, fearing she would afterwards regret pri-

vations which at present she was ignorant of: but Miss Montague placed the refusal to his consciousness that the girl was brought up in so different a stile, that she would be miserably embarrassed by the fashion and elegance of themselves.

Not a little rejoiced was Louisa at seeing the stage stop at Mrs. Goodricke's orchard-gate, and her much loved father alight. It was eight months since she had seen him; and the belief, that he was come to bid her adieu for the term of three long years—which had excited her tears all the morning—was in the moment of meeting forgotten. Charming as she was when he last saw her, she was now infinitely more so. Her
eighteenth

eighteenth year was just completed; and the simplicity of her dress rendered her superior to any description. While she went to hasten the dinner, and add a portion for the traveller, Mrs. Goodricke told her enraptured father, that Louisa's mind and accomplishments kept pace with her appearance. At her return, Mr. Mathews informed her, and her friend, of the unexpected offer Miss Montague had made of receiving her into the house as companion; and the high respect he bore the whole family, but particularly Eliza. The momentary delight she felt at her improving prospects was chastened by immediate reflection.—“ In Mrs. Goodricke's state

of health, my dear father," said she, "can I leave her? I am sure you would not ask it, if you knew that she is quite unable to assist herself *now*. I owe her too many obligations to quit her at such a time; and though this prospect promises great advantages, yet, as I should be unhappy in deserting her, I cannot view it in the light you both do."

But Mrs. Goodricke had a second motive for wishing her young charge sheltered by a more powerful protection than she could afford her. An old nobleman in the neighbourhood had perpetually distressed Louisa and her by his visits; and had latterly insulted the widow, by requesting her interest in disposing Miss Mathews to like him. With a wife living,

living, there was no doubt of his dishonourable intentions; which, however, she had completely guarded against, by emplanting every virtuous sentiment in her young pupil at a very early period of life. They had alike treated half a dozen letters of solicitation, to be received as a friend, with silent contempt. Mr. Mathews felt the resentments, at this information, a father must feel, and resolved to remove his girl as soon as possible; but, till Miss Montague fixed on the day, he could not stir. Louisa now saw that it was proper she should accompany her father's wishes with the sacrifice of her own; and therefore renounced the care of Mrs. Goodricke,

ricke, and attendance upon her, to enter into a stile of life she had not yet been initiated into, *even* by novels.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

AFTER the lapse of three days, Louisa received a letter from Mr. Mathews, to inform her, that he should come for her on the next day but one, and carry her first to wait on Lady Berkland, her godmother, where she would continue that night; and who would probably herself convey and introduce her to Miss Montague's, as he and his pupils would be at that hour some miles on their way to Dover. He concluded, by desiring Mrs. Goodricke and Louisa not to mention to their neighbours any thing about the latter's destination; but just simply to state
to

to their acquaintance, that Mr. Mathews meant to take his daughter away. In the mean while, Louisa was employed in furnishing herself with some necessary apparel, and altering and amending the little she already had by her. Early and late was she busied in this way, and attending upon her invalid friend, who was thankful that the uncommon sensibility of Louisa was spared by the necessity there was, on Lord Belhammond's account, for her speedy removal. But Louisa felt shocked at her apparent ingratitude, in deserting a being who had reared her from her infancy, and had proved a real parent in affectionate attachment. A thousand tender regrets swelled her bosom—"How shall I know
that

that Mary will attend you," said she: "in my absence, who will do, from motives of interest and necessity, what I do from duty and inclination?" Mrs. Goodricke assured her she should take good care of herself; and only entreated her, to let her hear, as frequently as she could create opportunity, of every thing which related to her. The intervening hours between the letter and the meeting with her father hung heavily upon Louisa's hands: she hoped and feared fifty things, without being able to define exactly what they were. When her father arrived, he presented Mrs. Goodricke with what he could very ill spare, a bank-note of twenty guineas, and took leave of her for the last time.

To

To Louisa this gift was a balm indescribable ; she embraced her kind friend, and entered the chaise with her father, who carried her to spend the day with her godmother : a lady who, from the hour she stood sponsor till the present moment, had never taken the pains to enquire whether she was dead or alive. But Mathews wisely thought, that his child should have some second resource, in case necessity obliged her to seek out a new protection ; and therefore carried her to Berkland House, whose haughty owner he looked upon to be a good-hearted woman in the main, though her unexpected elevation in life, from a very inferior rank, had turned her head with ridiculous pride.

To

To this lady he introduced Louisa, who was perfectly abashed by Lady Berkland's address to her father, of—"Mathews, is that girl your daughter?" Her pride and her admiration made her most perfectly ridiculous for the first hour.—Mathews, who knew her failing, was not surprized; but poor Louisa felt a stronger inclination to cry than to talk. "What," said she, "you are going to bind her to some comfortable trade, Mathews, I hope? The girl is a fine creature; but all fine creatures in London come to a shameful end, I think, unless they are quite in the world."—"No, Madam," said he, "I am carrying her up to Miss Montague, who has taken the charge of her, in my absence."

absence.”—“ In what capacity?”—“ As her friend and companion. But I could not bring her into your ladyship’s neighbourhood, without wishing her to pay her duty here.

After a moment’s pause—“ Indeed, I’m obliged by your visit,” said Lady Berkland, who happened to be the intimate friend of Miss Montague; and dreaded lest Louisa should describe the reception she gave her. “ Indeed, I am happy to see both you and your daughter: if I can serve her in any respect; if the loan of ten guineas, to furnish herself out decently for her place, will be acceptable, she is perfectly welcome.”

“ My father, Madam,” said Louisa, with warmth, “ has made that quite unnecessary.”

unnecessary." For the lady had uttered her last sentence with so imperious an air and voice, that both father and child revolted: instead of continuing under her roof, they took a hasty leave, and adjourned to the inn ; where a few mutton chops were preferable, in both their opinions, to an elegant dinner, when accompanied with pride and meanness.

CHAP. V.

MR. MATHEWS was now driven to a new contrivance about disposing of his child till the following morning, as he had received an intimation from old Montague, that he did not wish his sons to be in the way when Miss Mathews arrived. He therefore determined to carry her to Mrs. Wiatt's, with whom he had lodged at various times, when out of employment — a worthy, discreet woman, for whom he felt a real respect — and to her abode, in Dean Street, Soho, they accordingly drove. When the chaise arrived at her door, they perceived that

that her lodgings were let, by some very fashionable people being in conversation at the drawing-room window : Mrs. Wiatt having herself answered the door, and discovered Mr. Mathews and his daughter, she insisted so pressingly upon their alighting, that he was in a manner compelled to do what he rather wished to avoid; he heard one of the men, who was lolling out of the drawing-room window, say loud enough to be heard—" Lady Mary, shall we usher in the parson to say grace ?" But, as Louisa had accepted the invitation of Mrs. Wiatt, it was too late to retract. Scarce had Mathews and his daughter taken their seats in the good woman's back-parlour, when the door opened,

opened, and William Montague entered; who, in the names of Lady Mary, and Colonel Rainhault, requested the pleasure of seeing both father and daughter to dinner, which was just placing on the table. With a profusion of thanks, they however declined it: assuring their friends they had dined three hours ago; and that Miss Mathews was in her travelling dress, and too much fatigued to profit by Lady Mary's politeness; their chaise was in waiting, and they merely stopped to enquire after Mrs. Wiatt.

When William Montague rejoined his friends in the drawing-room, and delivered their answer to Lady Mary's invitation, he condoled with her for losing a sight of the most beautiful creature

ture God ever created—"Exquisite!" he exclaimed: "charming!—irresistible!"

"Ten to one she is ugly as Sin," said the Colonel, "by your raptures. I know you of old. I am not taken in."

"Upon my soul, I am in downright earnest: I never beheld so enchanting an angel!" said William.

"Seamed with the small-pox, for a hundred pounds!" answered the Colonel.

"But, in earnest now," said Lady Mary, "is she handsome, or not?"

"Upon my life, Lady Mary, "I am in earnest. Come with me, and I'll convince you. Old Mathews will be pleased at your endeavour to persuade him to take his seat at the table: you

never can see such a cunning pattern of
excelling nature again."

"Would it not look odd?" said she.

"Not at all," replied William; "let
me conduct you." And down they both
walked, at the instant dinner was setting
upon the table. Young Montague threw
open the little parlour-door; and, in-
forming his tutor, that Lady Mary
thought he had executed his embassy so
ill that she was resolved to try her own
powers of persuasion, he left her to old
Mathews, while he addressed the young
lady with enquiring how she liked the
idea of a town-life.

The Colonel, and four or five other
gentlemen, were planning how they
should get a view of the traveller, if

Lady

Lady Mary's reports were like Montague's; and impatiently waited for her entrance into the parlour again, to know what steps they should take. "Ah! ha!" said the Colonel, "what a blockhead am I! I'll go and say something civil as well as my wife." He accordingly went to Mrs. Wiatt's apartments, where he stopped for a minute; and then all three returned to the table, in perfect admiration of Louisa, having left father and daughter prevailing on Mrs. Wiatt to go to the pit of Covent-Garden theatre. But they previously settled, that Louisa should return and sleep with her; and Mathews, after seeing them safe again to Dean Street, should join his two pupils at their fa-

ther's late supper in Cavendish Square, and with them adjourn for the night to Osborn's Hotel.

After the conclusion of a play and farce, delightful to Louisa, and not less so to her parent, who was watching the effect which every sentence had upon his loved child, they quitted the theatre for Mrs. Wiatt's; and, having seen his daughter re-seated in this good woman's back-parlour, he took his affectionate leave of Louisa, whose heart had been heavily oppressed all the way home with the knowledge that this trial awaited her. The hour was so late, that he hastened from his weeping child; a circumstance he was glad of, as he felt too many tender sensations at that moment

ment to wish for witnesses. They embraced, re-embraced, and parted. Poor Louisa felt this separation more strongly than she had ever hitherto done. It is true, that her father had twice been absent from her before, for the respective terms of two, and of three years: but then she had what she had been accustomed to consider as a paternal home. At the earliest tour, she was eight; at the latter, eleven years of age: and though at that season her mind shewed the most charming sensibility, it was unattended with regrets about the future. She felt, at the present moment, as if deserted by her parent at the very time when his presence became doubly necessary. Among strangers, what would become

of her! These ideas occupied her mind for a few minutes, when she recollected that the Montagues were inclined to be her friends; that it depended in a great measure upon herself to make them effectually so; and that her prospects were higher on the second review than she had allowed them to be at the first.

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

MR. Mathews had rallied up his spirits sufficiently to meet Mr. Montague and his family, with a cheerful countenance, in Cavendish Square. They talked over every little interesting occurrence; and settled the correspondence, which was to be punctual, between George and his sister Eliza, and between all parties, when inclination prompted them to communicate events to each other. William Montague had told his father of the incomparable beauty of Louisa; and created a longing desire in Eliza for the arrival of the morning, which was to bring her to be

resident in the family. Lucy assured her brother she had no great idea of *his* beauties; she never had seen one of the women he admired as even tolerably pretty, much less handsome. Had George, indeed, seen her, she should have stood a better chance of not being disappointed; for his taste was in unison with her own, which was formed on the strictest rules of art.

“My dear Lucy,” said Charlotte, “give William blue eyes, rosy cheeks, and light hair, and he sees beauty; though the owner has a flat nose and thick lips. Miss Mathews, I doubt not, is a pretty little rustic; the world alone can make her acquire that elegance William at present ascribes to her.”

“You

"You are amazingly knowing, Charlotte, I think," replied William; "and, after your flattering opinion of my judgment on beauty, I must be excused for quitting the subject with you. To Eliza I repeat, that had Miss Mathews had your education, she could not have been more easy and graceful in her manner and appearance, than she seemed to be to me and Lady Mary Rainhault."

"In the amazing *long* intercourse of *five minutes*, by your own account!" rejoined Charlotte.

The re-entrance of the old gentleman and Mathews, who had some little matters to conclude in the study, put an end to a conversation which George and Eliza

had left to the three. The carriage now waited, and the families took a cordial and affectionate leave of each other, and departed. The young men were elated with the idea, that a few hours would set them forward on an expedition they had for some months anticipated with expectation and pleasure; and, getting into the coach, ordered it to drive to Osborn's Hotel.

Scarce had they got half-way to the Adelphi, when the coach was stopped by four footpads; who, with horrible execrations, demanded their money. Old Mathews instantly complied; but the young men were determined they would not be robbed: they had only two sticks; one a switch, the other a strong cane

cane with a spear. With the first, William saluted the fellow who opened the coach-door; while George knocked a second to the ground, and called "Fire!" The man was stunned so completely, that he lay on the spot. At this moment, George's side of the coach was thrown open, and a pistol fired at him, which took its direction through his hat; when, throwing out the spear, he wounded the villain. A rattle, and the throwing up of some windows, alarmed the whole gang, three of whom took to their heels; but the man who was stunned was unable to join them. George and the two watchmen secured him, and delivered him up to the round-house; but the gentlemen lamented that the evidence

they must give against him would, in all probability, retard their journey for some days.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

WHEN the morning arrived, they agreed to go first to the magistrate, and afterwards to Cavendish Square, to relate the adventure of the preceding night, and to take Mr. Montague's opinion on what steps they had best pursue. They accordingly breakfasted, and sallied forth to the office in Bow Street; where the purse which old Mathews had yielded on demand was produced, but the money had disappeared. The man was, however, committed for trial upon the fullest conviction; and, as the two watchmen and a stranger, who had been active in securing

ing

ing him, were sufficient evidence, they posted away to Mr. Montague's, with the intention of setting off on their wished-for tour some time in the same day.

When every thing necessary upon this occasion was explained to the wondering family, they received the warm congratulation of their friends, who were only thankful that people so dear to them as the two Montagues and their venerable tutor had escaped from so desperate a set of ruffians. But George had another motive for being reconciled to a temporary delay of his favourite scheme; for the first object which met his eyes in his sisters dressing-room, was the lovely, the interesting Miss Mathews, who had arrived only a few minutes

minutes before, under the disagreeable and unavoidable necessity of introducing herself. To render such a situation as little distressing as possible, is a faculty very few people possess, when the person who makes the experiment is beheld as an humble dependant; but Miss Montague *had* that happy art. She embraced the embarrassed Louisa, introduced her as another sister to Lucy and Charlotte; and assured her, that she had always felt such a real affection for old Mr. Mathews, that she was glad he had placed his daughter, as his deputy, to receive every proof of regard she had to bestow.

Thus raised by the gentle expressions of Eliza, Louisa had recovered that placid

placid and satisfied appearance which, only upon such a trial as coming among strangers in her peculiar situation, forsook her: she regained not only a degree of composure, but felt a confidence in the friends she had just acquired, which they had alike bespoken from their outward appearance. The charming, the modest, the diffident Louisa, with every attraction Nature in her most lavish mood could bestow, rivetted George's eyes in the moment of his entrance, and fascinated his soul before his departure. Accustomed to view a like conduct in the very few men she had seen under Mrs. Goodricke's roof, she believed embarrassment was more natural to men than to women, never imagin-

ing

ing that her enchanting form created this effect. The unconsciousness of being particularly pleasing to the most agreeable man she had ever beheld, made her treat both him and his brother with the most unaffected freedom: indeed, she had always considered the pupils of her loved father, though unknown to her, in a fraternal light.—Notwithstanding old Mr. Montague's foresight had been so unexpectedly baffled by the young men's return, he enjoyed the day most completely, and ordered them to send for their baggage from the Hotel, as they might as well, whenever they did set forward, take their departure from Cavendish Square. All parties were so perfectly pleased with this arrange-

arrangement, that immediate steps were taken to send to the Adelphi; and, the birth-day of Eliza being only two days distant, obtained for the young men permission to spend it in town.

On the evening's proving fair or foul, depended either Ranelagh or the little theatre in the Hay-Market. Old Montague was so pleased with Louisa, that he promised to take her himself to every place worth seeing; which her father rather regretted, as he feared the novelty might warp her mind from that love and preference to retirement he had tried to instil. But Eliza assured him he was wrong—"Trust to me, my good friend," said she, "that a surfeit is sure

to succeed the perpetual round of dissipation young people enter into."

"My daughter, Sir," said Montague, "is a philosopher of twenty-three. Do you speak from experience, Eliza?"

"Yes, upon my honour," said she: "seven years out of eight—for I was presented at fifteen, you know—I absolutely *lived* in public. I will freely own, that the doing so has injured my health, and palled my taste. I certainly like a play, am fond of an opera, and charmed with a fine concert; but, twice a week to enter into these amusements, is as much as I have inclination for."

"And I," said Charlotte, "could go every day, every hour, if it was possible, with increasing delight."

"I halve

“ I halve the difference,” said Lucy.
“ Conversation can be had in private houses, as well as public places. For the theatres, I scarcely ever attend to them with my mind, though I carry my little person there. I keep up a perpetual conversation during the time, which amuses me extremely.”

“ And pray,” added Mathews, “ do the neighbouring boxes thank you?”
At this question William entered the room; and, hearing the last words, he knew that the query must have been addressed to Lucy—“ Sooner,” said he, “ would I take my seat among the gods, on the night of a riot, than place myself within ear-shot of Lucy, when I wanted to understand a play.”

“ Your

“ Your sister knows I dread her upon these occasions,” said Mathews.

Lucy replied—“ You flatter me : it shews that I have power, of *some* sort or other, over all mankind. Here are two instances, my brother and you—I can banish both at my will.”

“ But, upon my soul,” replied William, “ you cannot *recall* us!”

Eliza stepped in to save her sister from William’s lash, by asking Louisa which opinion of public places she adopted.

“ Upon my word,” said she, “ I am too great a novice to determine between three people, who have all had experience. At present, I think, there may be too much of a good thing; and, I

am

am persuaded that, if I went to a play, my motive would be to attend to *it*, not to the audience."

"Miss Mathews shall decide between Charlotte and Lucy," said William. "To-night I cannot be of the party; so I particularly request *her* to attend *entirely* to the play; and to-morrow, at the same theatre, I will take my seat at her elbow, and converse with her during the whole performance, to enable her to form a just opinion."

"Cunning dog!" said old Montague. "Yes, you are a chip of the old block."—"I give Louisa my permission," said her father, "to love a public place while she is in it—I hate to see a listless indifference about any one thing—

thing—but I would have her prefer an evening, spent at the fire-side of a friend, to all amusements of this kind. A moderate degree of dissipation is necessary to our education; but too much for either sex enervates the mind, and in general affects the principles. In my child's humble lot of life, I should wish she entered little into public; but I feel more than contented in placing her in such hands—I am satisfied at my heart. Should any thing happen to me," said Mathews, "why *then*——"

"Why *then* she is *my* child," said Montague, and raked out the ashes; while Mathews walked out of the room, without uttering a syllable.

C H A P. VIII.

L O U I S A was quite overcome. Eliza led her to the window for a few minutes, and then suffered her to re-join her father: she found him in the very next room; and, shutting the door, took her seat on the next chair, and kissed his hand.

“ There are some moments attended with tears, my girl,” said Mathews, “ which I would not exchange for the choicest hour of mirth I ever enjoyed. You are my all—I have not one single apprehension about your conduct; because, I trust, Nature and I have rendered your principles permanent. Nevertheless,

theless, you are placed in a post of danger. The best minds are liable to corruption from the contagion of example. Distrust yourself only so far as to induce you to weigh every action well before you commit it. The one infallible sentence I would wish you to engrave upon your heart, is, "Lord, lead me not into temptation." It will operate as a talisman over your whole conduct. You will frequently investigate your past actions; and conscience will enable you to condemn, or acquit, accordingly. I repeat, you have many trials to encounter: the ocean is calm and inviting just now, but who will insure us from storms? My dearest child, I give you my fondest assurance, that I

trust most securely in your prudence and virtue. Your present situation will require the exertion of both in a particular degree. Look upon *me* as your most *faithful*, most *disinterested* friend—as such, conceal no one circumstance from me. Guard your heart, and do not dispose of it without letting me know an event which must tincture my future days with pleasure or pain.”

“Are these entreaties necessary, my dear father?” said she. “I do, however, promise to give you fair, candid, and undisguised accounts of every event which concerns me. The mind you have formed is a grateful one; and the hour which will be most dear to my heart, will be that of your retirement from

from fatigue, when I can manifest what affectionate love I *feel*, by what I perform, for my dearest father."

"God bless thee, child!" said Mathews; "I must walk." He opened the room-door: when they took different directions—he down stairs, and Louisa to her own apartment.

CHAP. IX.

WHEN the family met at dinner, it was discovered that, on account of an actor's sudden indisposition, the play, which was Hamlet, was changed for a new comedy, much admired by the town; and this information caused a message to be dispatched to the stables, for the carriage to be at the door exactly at six o'clock, as they wished to see the whole performance. The young men, and Mathews, were obliged to go into the city: so the old man escorted the females to the Hay-Market theatre; when the first object which met Louisa's eye was Lord Bellhammond's

hammond's servant, keeping the adjoining box for his master. The flurry she felt at a recollection of his insulting letters was soon done away, and left her at liberty to enjoy the agreeable effects of so brilliant a scene as our theatres afford the eye of an observing spectator.

The three ladies had thrown Louisa into the back ground at her first entrance, and placed themselves in the front row; till Mr. Montague, who had an uncommon share of good nature to all young people, desired Lucy or Charlotte, who had seen plays eternally, to relinquish their seats to his novice. It may appear strange, that these younger sisters attempted to persuade each other,

but never moved one inch themselves; which Eliza perceiving, drew a veil over, by assuring Louisa she should prefer her seat, if she would oblige her by changing. Louisa would have declined it, had Mr. Montague suffered it. Compelled to accept it, she moved forward, and excited the general attention of the house to the box she occupied: a circumstance which might have created unpleasant sensations in the bosom of Lucy and Charlotte, had they not devoutly believed every eye was directed to themselves.

As the second act began, Lord Belhammond made his entree into the next box on Louisa's side. He directly enquired of Miss Montague, when his
godson

godson George meant to depart; and, from the conversation, convinced Louisa that he was the intimate friend and frequent guest of the family she had entered into. At first, the Earl did not perceive her, as her head was turned towards the stage; but, the instant he discovered who the fourth lady in Mr. Montague's box proved to be, he addressed her with all the *non-chalance* imaginable; enquired after poor Mrs. Goodricke, for whom he had the most perfect, most sincere respect; and begged to know where he might have the honour of leaving his name in town.

A very distant curtsy, and petresying look, accompanied her reply; which

was, that she was at Mr. Montague's: when, turning to Eliza, she instantly quitted all conversation with him, and kept her friend in discourse about the play. In vain did his lordship try to force his remarks upon her; unless the question was directly applied to herself, she never appeared to attend to one syllable he uttered. Thus mortified, thus repulsed, he turned to Lucy and Charlotte, who readily rattled away to amuse themselves, to bewitch his lordship, and to annoy the little unbred people who came to a play merely to see and hear it.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

WHEN they returned home, they found the three gentlemen waiting their arrival; and the mutual enquiries of all were more particularly addressed to Miss Mathews than to the other ladies, as she had only once been at an entertainment of the kind before. Much wit and good-humour enlivened the intermediate half-hour between their meeting and supper-time; which, being but a very slight repast of salad and sandwiches, kept them not long from repose. They retired fully satisfied with the pleasing events of the day.

E 5

“ Well,”

“ Well,” said Charlotte to Lucy, as she was undressing herself, “ I am still an infidel ! I cannot, nor will not, believe Miss Mathews’s colour is natural, notwithstanding her father’s ill-timed discourse about rouge. She is certainly a handsome girl, but awkward.”

“ Unformed !”

“ Not one trait of fashion about her.”

“ How should she ? Mrs. Goodricke, I believe, is very poor.”

“ And I should fancy not very bright, by the specimen her pupil gave us.”

“ Well, now, I declare I think her no fool : she says good things without knowing

knowing she does. Yes, she certainly rouges; I have not the shadow of a doubt upon the subject: there is no harm in that more than in wearing powder in one's hair. But, at the same time, I do think, in the capacity she is, it would be better let alone. By the bye, did you observe how the talking to a *Lord* terrified her?"

"She took refuge, under Eliza's wing, from the great man. Poor girl! I wonder whether she knew that lords were made of flesh and blood?"

"What a droll creature you are, Charlotte! Come, let us be just: she is a sweet girl; and not one in twenty would have behaved half so well, in her situation; among strangers."

“ And, pray, have we not done our parts? Had she been a lady of fashion, we could not have behaved more attentively to her. I believe one may carry this notion too far—I am sure my father did.”

“ How! I don’t comprehend you?”

“ Why, by placing her in the front—I was quite surprized, and only wondered at Eliza for moving. A due distance preserves respect from such people.”

“ *Such people*, Charlotte! Mr. Mathews is a gentleman from his birth, as well as his profession, you know.”

“ And his daughter is a companion and child of a tutor. It is not what he *was*, but what he *is*. The lady receives
wages

wages of fifty pounds a year: but is it less wages for that? or is she less a dependant, because we treat her as an equal?"

"You shock me, Charlotte! I won't talk to you—it is quite unamiable. As far as we have yet seen, the poor girl is uncommonly pleasing. Good night." An echo of "Good night!" came from Charlotte; and the ladies retired to rest, as the whole house had already done.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

WHEN the family were assembled at the breakfast-table on the following morning, a letter received by Eliza from a cousin she particularly loved, and her sisters as particularly hated, gave rise to a conversation entirely new to Louisa, and in which she was excluded from the smallest share: a circumstance she rejoiced at, as the ladies, in these differences, gave way to a perpetual kind of spur, that distressed all those they appealed to, which was on every occasion. Though William knew the consequence the question would produce, and

and the acrimony it would occasion, he enquired of Eliza, Whether that was Lady Frances Newton's writing?

"Yes," said she; "I feared she was ill."

"God forbid!" replied Lucy; "for then she is affected with a scribbling mania most distressing to her friends."

"I never knew she had any," cried Charlotte: "she has a multitude of acquaintance!"

"True, Charlotte," said William; "she is too handsome to have sincere friends of her own sex, or disinterested ones of ours."

"I hope you do not think I have one atom of envy towards her. In the first place, I do not think her handsome; and,

and, in the second, her manner is so obsolete—I may call it—so methodistical—so vastly good, and vastly wise!”

“ And very good things, too, Charlotte. I wish she would bestow the overplus you rail at on you,” said Mr. Montague; “ for I think, with Eliza, that Lady Frances is a very charming young woman, a good daughter, and a warm-hearted friend. Mrs. Boothby let me into her character; and, since that, she is a great favourite with me.”

“ So she would be with me, papa, was I sixty. But, at nineteen, I own, I do not love a sermon to exceed the length of an hour.”

George, who always shook his head at the deliverer of a rude speech, was
vexed

vexed that the girls indulged themselves in the terrible propensity they had to sharp speeches: he tried to change the conversation, by asking Eliza what news Lady Frances had told her. "Has she arrived at Sir Walter Leith's yet?"

"On the Thursday: but, in her way, she met with a new proof that Vice shrinks before Virtue. It is so beautiful a story, I will read it aloud, as soon as I have read the remainder of my letter. My father will be charmed."

"What," said William, "she has placed some naughty man on the stool of repentance; and paid a methodist parson for telling him he would go to the devil, who dwells in the *bottomless* pit, *paved* with human bones!"

"You

“ You are very witty, William—but quite out.”

“ No, no,” said Lucy; “ she has led some erring maiden to the Magdalen Hospital, where she will pray and sing psalms for the space of three years; and then be appointed governess to the children of a woman of quality, or set up a boarding-school on her own account.”

“ Both wrong in your guesses,” said Charlotte, “ for a guinea. She has taken in some chubby bantling, that the artful mother had placed at her door, knowing that her ladyship’s pitiful heart would aid her in cheating it’s owner.”

“ In common charity, young ladies,” said Mathews, “ do not lay such heinous

nous crimes to Lady Frances's charge; perhaps she is guileless. Let Miss Montague's letter decide."

"First, let us have our white pocket-handkerchiefs ready," said Charlotte; "I know we shall want them."

"Silence, girls!—Eliza, begin."

"Miss Mathews," said Lucy, "I'll tread on your foot, when to begin."

"Are you not unfair, Lucy? I mean to compel you to love my cousin, or I protest I would withhold my letter.—Mr. Mathews, will you hold forth?"

"Very proper," said William; "her letters are sermons.—The Rev. Mr. Mathews will begin."

"And her text," replied Montague, "*Have charity towards all men.* Begin, Mathews;

Mathews; we have had a long prologue."

"And I heartily long for the epilogue.—When I have dried my eyes—All in due order," added Lucy.

"Silence, in mercy; sisters, silence!" said George.

"MY DEAR COUSIN,"

"After a very pleasant journey from Herald House to Leith Hall, I take up my pen to do away your apprehensions about me and my sore throat, which has most obligingly taken its leave, and left me, not only at full liberty to enjoy the prospects, but to inhale the air, of this delightful place, which I contrive
to

to do at an hour when you lazy mortals are in your first sleep.

“ But I have little leisure to write at present: what I have, shall be devoted to the relation of a circumstance we met with in our journey to this place. It has charmed me, and I doubt not will you, which tempts me to stick to my toilette for another half hour, though my maid seems quite impatient.—Passing through the little village of Belford, we were detained for want of horses; and, having no remedy, we determined to make the best of our situation; and accordingly ordered a good dinner to be ready at three o'clock: previous to which, we strolled about the place, saw the grounds of Clift House, which are beautifully laid

out

out by Capability Brown; collected epitaphs out of the church-yard, and returned to our inn. But here we waited some time till our dinner arrived. Lady Mary Leith and I were sitting by the window; when a young woman, mean and plain in her person and dress, attracted our notice, as being the wet-nurse of two little girls, who appeared of an equal age, about six months old. We took out our purses to give each a trifle, when the waiter came in with our servants. Lady Mary asked whether the woman, who stood on the opposite side of the way, had any more children beside the twins. "No," he replied; "she had but one child; the other was her husband's, by another woman. My
mistress

mistress is very good to her; for the poor creature is noticed by gentle and simple." This raised our curiosity; and we sent for the landlady, who assured us Mary Stephens was the admiration and pity of the whole village. "She married the hostler of the White Lion," said she, "a sad idle, drunken fellow, near two years ago: and an idle huffy, who lived with me, seduced the man, I believe; for he behaved, to all appearance, very kindly to his wife. My servant's shame was soon visible; but these poor, illiterate creatures, Ma'm, do not feel as other people do. I feared, lest harm should come to the woman; and I told her, I would let her stay as long as she could go about, and did all I could to make

make her a penitent : but I had only my labour for my pains. Bad news travels apace. Mary Stephens was soon told of her husband's baseness, and took on sorely, poor creature ! To me she came ; and I spoke the truth, which I thought would have broke her heart. Soon after she was brought to bed of a little girl : her rival was delivered of another, and the shameless mother had not provided a rag for it. Mary Stephens sent half of the few things she had scraped together for her own infant, to this seducer of her husband. On the fifth day, however, this sinful creature grew very bad ; and, when she thought she should die, she grieved about her child, and prayed God to take both, if he took her.

her. Mary Stephens begged me to assure the unfortunate mother, she would take the child and nurse it with her own, as she hoped for God's blessing! I do believe, ladies, this message killed Jenny, for she died the same day; and the bantling in Mary's left-arm is the child she left behind her."—Guess, whether we did not feel an interest in every endearment she bestowed on the infant.—

"But you must be impatient to know what effect this conduct had upon her husband. He acknowledged his fault, forswore drink, and devoted his leisure hours to assist his wife; carried her every penny he could earn, and they both appeared happy: but, half a year ago, Robin was seized with a deep melancholy,

at thinking he had wronged such a good wife; it has settled on his brain, and he is now a confirmed lunatic. The mother of the girl who seduced him, was so struck with Mary Stephens's goodness, that she takes care of the poor man, while his wife nurses the children. Providence is very good to this poor woman; for she often, through me, collects eight or ten shillings a week: and the Squire at Clift House gives a shilling a week for each child."

"Could I rob you of this story?"—Lady Mary, after a pause of five minutes, broke silence, with saying—"Had this woman but been an empress!—had this been related by Sterne, it would have been too much! God bless you,
my

my dear Eliza; make my love and compliments acceptable to all.

“ F. NEWTON.”

“ And *this* woman is an hostler’s wife!”
said Miss Mathews.

The approving eyes of her father, and the Montagues, were fixed on Louisa : there was not at the minute so proud a man in the kingdom as Mathews.

C H A P. XII.

“WELL,” said Charlotte, “I must be humble, and ask Lady Frances’s pardon. I thought she was going to blazon forth her own good deeds, and that I abominate; but it is her way.”

“We differ there,” said Eliza. “If ever she does mention a charitable action performed by herself, it is only to those whose purses are deep; it is not to catch praise, but half guineas; and I think her more amiable for relating, through this motive, what she would indeed conceal, unless the unfortunate profited

profited by it.—Charlotte *bas* had grace to make an apology.”

Lucy now acknowledged, that the tale was interesting, and prettily told; though, she confessed, it was more calculated to make a novel than a letter: but she could not credit, with Eliza's facility, the romantic, unnatural story. Lady Frances had such a comprehensive fancy, that she could reconcile impossibilities to her own imagination. “She creates circumstances,” said she, “out of airy nothing; and, having done so, grows such an enthusiastic admirer and believer of her own invention, that she would die for the truth of it next day.”

“For instance,” added Charlotte, “we were walking round the Square,

when a girl of eighteen, just at down-lying, solicited us to get her into the Lying-in Hospital, for she had a large family to maintain. Odd numbers have charms; so Frances pitched upon seven, and directly made a purse for the distressed mother of seven helpless bairns; and I doubt not, by this time, she believes she stood godmother to *all*."

"William can set that story right," said Eliza; "you confound two stories in one: but I think we had best change the subject." Then, rising from the breakfast-table, she went to her harpsichord; and the several members of the family dispersed, as inclination moved them."

CHAP. XIII.

THE young men had been commissioned by their sisters to make the fashionable lounge of St. James's Street, at the proper hour, to pick up some elegant additional dancers for the ball to be given the following evening. Cards had been sent to a great many people; but, being in June, the greater part of the distinguished world were gone to the country. Both Lucy and Charlotte had, for the last week, contrived to visit every probable place where so desirable an acquisition could be gained; and, at Christie's, were fortunate

nate enough to meet with their cousin, Jack Stanhope, leaning on the arm of Sir William Archer. It is true, that they generally contrived to *cut* Mr. Stanhope; for he had little to recommend him to two very *tonish* young women. He was modest, diffident, and sincere—was the son of a clergyman with a very large family, who had given him an excellent education, enabled him to take orders, and solicited Sir William Archer to get him a curacy, which had just been complied with. His person was neither good nor bad, nor had he a handsome face; though, to make amends for this deficiency, he prepossessed an indifferent person with an idea that he was sensible, benevolent, and obliging. To
this

this gentleman—who almost hesitated whether he should *volunteer* a bow to his great relatives, who had so often convinced him of the badness of their memories—did these ladies vouchsafe a gracious “How d’ ye?” When Jack, who was flattered to be thus accosted before his friend by these elegant women, introduced Sir William Archer immediately. “You mean to be with us to-morrow?” said Lucy. “To-morrow!” answered Stanhope; “why, what is to-morrow?”—“Why, a card has surely “been sent you?” said Charlotte—“We meant it, believe me.” And explaining the occasion of a ball and supper, and the continuance of their brothers in town, protested the thing would

be nothing without him. He accordingly promised to go; and promised, at their desire, to bring Sir William also.

Not a little elated with their success, in securing this elegant swain, they sallied forth from the rooms; and, ordering the carriage to follow, walked up St. James's Street; where George, and the Marquis of Pearcefield, were standing at a fruiterer's door, in close conversation. They knew not the gentleman, and the back of their brother was towards them. Then the Marquis said, loud enough for the women to hear—"Two fine girls, by Heaven!"

George was provoked, when he discovered that this had been said of his sisters: but the ladies were pleased; and,
telling

telling their brother where they had seen Mr. Stanhope, and their success in prevailing upon him to continue in town for their ball, politely asked the Marquis, whether they might hope for the same success with him. He had declined George's invitation, he said; but he did not *then* know what he refused:—he should certainly have the honour of attending them. They now re-entered their carriage, and drove home; for the dinner-hour was not very distant.

C H A P. XIV.

WHILE this happened abroad, a different scene passed at home. Eliza and Miss Mathews had devoted the morning to the harpsichord, a dozen turns in the square, and looking over some drawings which had merit enough to deserve a nice finishing. As they were sorting out the best, the servant announced Lord Bellhammond, who had particularly asked for the ladies. Though the blushes of Louisa were unnoticed by Miss Montague, they were not by his lordship: he designed to give her time to recover, and therefore entered into that trifling kind of chat,
so

so frequent between great lords and great ladies, where a great deal of nothing was said and laughed at; while Louisa went on with her assortments, without in the least regarding his lordship. At length, turning to Louisa, he assured her, that the town air agreed with her charmingly—she had improved *perfection*. He hoped to see Mr. Mathews before he went abroad; for, if he chose the living of Fair Lawn, on the death of the present incumbent, it waited his acceptance.

“ I may answer for Mr. Mathews, I think,” said Eliza.

“ So can I,” replied Louisa—“ that my father declines it.”

“ De-

“Declines it, Louisa!—impossible; my dear: it is worth five hundred a year. Is it not, my lord?”

“Were it five thousand, I verily believe it would not tempt my father.”

“Above four hundred, and under five.—I do not believe Miss Mathews comprehends me,” replied Lord Bellhammond.

“It is because I *do* comprehend Lord Bellhammond, that I venture to foretel my father’s opinion.”

“Believe me, Louisa, you do not consider what you say, nor do you understand the greatness of the offer—Suffer me to explain, my dear.”

“His lordship knows I comprehend him.—Compared with some other offers, perhaps, I may with justice say, I understand

derstand the littleness of the offer. I request Lord Bellammond not to propose this *particular* favour to my father, because I know he *cannot* accept of it; and that it's being entirely out of his power will create unpleasant sensations to him."

"You talk in mystery, Louisa—Neither my Lord nor I *can* comprehend you." In a few moments the Earl took his departure; and the ladies went over the best part of the above discourse again: when Louisa, with that regard to the peace of other people, which every heart not naturally bad must feel, endeavoured to lay the surprize she had raised in the bosom of her friend, by saying her father had good reason for rejecting

jecting any services from his lordship; but she did not feel herself at liberty to relate what they were. She begged her friend not to condemn the severity of her manner to his lordship—a recollection of his conduct to Mrs. Goodricke brought it forth.

“ I enquire no farther,” said Miss Montague; “ but allow me to say, the reason must be great, which justifies your refusal of such a favour in such a manner.”

“ My father would perish before he would accept any favour from Lord Bellhammond.”

“ It is sufficient, Louisa.”

The entrance of Mr. Abercrombie, at this moment, changed the conversation.

This

This gentleman was the intimate friend of the family, from a very uncommon circumstance.—The attachment he had for the late Mrs. Montague, prior to her marriage, and his amiable and disinterested conduct upon the preference this lady gave his rival, had created both in the breast of Mr. Montague and his wife the sincerest friendship and esteem: and these sentiments were implanted in the heart of every child; who, in all moments of difficulty—for even childhood has many to encounter—applied to the advocate and mediator, Mr. Abercrombie; whose fortune, which some years ago had been large, was reduced, from the very nobleness of his nature. His brother, the admiral, was
in

in all senses of the word a man of the first fashion. Dogs, horses, women, and gaming—with a wife, and numerous family, to make these pursuits still more fashionable—were the causes of his dying insolvent, and leaving his widow very far gone in a decline; the consequence of a life of dissipation, merely adopted to drive away corroding thoughts at the indifference of a husband she once tenderly loved, toward herself, and neglect of his affairs, which affected his children.

In this embarrassing situation did Mr. Abercrombie, who continued still a bachelor, step forward, to adopt this unfortunate woman's children as his own. The family estate, which the late admiral

admiral possessed, was deeply mortgaged, and no provision made for nine children, the eldest but eleven years of age. He settled all the annual income, the widow's jointure excepted, for the payment of just debts, and carried the family to his own house in the south of France, where the physicians had, previous to the admiral's death, advised her to remove; and keeping the three boys behind, placed them at the high school in Edinburgh. Within six months, however, the little girls were bereft of their worthy mother—for such she had truly been, notwithstanding her dissipation, which was taken as a medicine to banish a lowness of spirits, that she often feared would affect her intellects—
and

and Abercrombie received them all under his own roof, to superintend with his own eye the education of his nieces. For their sakes, had this excellent uncle still continued single; and, by his wise management, the estate of his brother was restored to it's former splendour, before it arrived at the hands of his son; but not without compelling Mr. Abercrombie to sell an estate which he had purchased on his return from India, where he had made, in the Company's service, a very competent fortune. From the death of their mother, till Charles Abercrombie's coming of age, their uncle took every expence attending the nine children upon himself, and he is at this time reaping the rewards of
his

his benevolence ; for, with the sons and daughters of the house of Newcastle, we may justly say—" All the men are valiant, and the women virtuous."

CHAP. XV.

AS the family, Mr. Abercrombie, Lord Haleborough, Mr. Arran, and Jack Stanhope, were whiling away the most tedious minutes in the four and twenty hours—the time between the assembling of company and dinner—with turning over a book of drawings, thrumming a tune with one hand, and skimming over a newspaper, the servant announced that it was ready: when the three Miss Montagues were immediately proffered the hands of Lord Haleborough, Mr. Arran, and Mr. Mathews; while George and William alike stepped

stepped forward to bespeak the like favour from Louisa. "Chuse, Madam," said William: when old Montague assured them, it was an awkward situation for a lady to be in, and he was Don Quixote, come to deliver her; so, taking her hand, which was most unwillingly relinquished by George, if we dare judge from appearances, he seated his lovely partner at the table between his son and himself: for the younger ladies had judged it improper to be too civil to a person in Miss Mathews's situation, and therefore rather abruptly took what they conceived to be the first seats at their father's table; an inattention which was marked by Eliza, who always sought to raise the humble, but happily
unregarded

unregarded by Louisa, who rather placed any forgetfulness on the score of good-breeding in the Miss Montagues to levity, than to design; for she could not think so unworthy a propensity dwelt in the human heart.—Thus did she blunt the shafts which were so constantly, and so unprovokedly, levelled against her—

“ If ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.”

For, had she been educated in what is termed *life*, she would have had reason to revolt fifty times a day, at the pre-meditated neglects of Lucy and Charlotte. One would desire her to read, and instantly begin a conversation with her
sister

sister about the drawing-room, or the cause of a difference between her particular friends. If she was relating any thing in the course of conversation, she often met with total absence from her hearers; or—"Your pardon, my dear; you must tell it me by and bye; for I'm so busy—" At the first moment, she felt flurried at such conduct; but a little reflection made her justly conclude, that this behaviour injured themselves, not her. What a contrast was Eliza to her sisters! Like her father, she received Miss Mathews as another Miss Montague—there was no difference—the same friendly ease and good-nature prevailed to them all alike, and made

Louisa still more assiduous to deserve the friendship and affection of a woman she considered so truly estimable.

CHAP. XVI.

WHEN the conversation at table was pretty general, George said to Louisa—"I long to know your opinion of the story we heard at breakfast: do you think there can be such a character in nature as this Mary Stephens?"

"Most assuredly—what is so natural as to endeavour to reclaim those we love?"

"Very true; but can we love those who use us ill, who behave treacherously, who forfeit our esteem?"

"That affection, which could be withdrawn on the first offence, would

ill deserve the name. I think the repetition of injuries would forfeit our *esteem* wholly, but not justify us for deserting the object of such a connexion. Some parents are more attached to the child they have ofteneft chastised, than——”

“ And there is more joy in heaven,” said William—who had, unobserved, been listening very attentively to both—
“ over one repentant sinner, you know, than over ninety and nine just persons.”

“ But,” said George, “ you urge the near connexion as the plea for forgiveness—I think that *very* circumstance makes the error more unpardonable.”

Louisa

Louisa replied—"I agree with you there: the error, on the man's part, is more unpardonable; but the ties, on the part of his wife, to forgive, and to try to reclaim him, are drawn tighter by the one and the same circumstance—marriage. Esteem may be banished; but a recollection of past regard, blended with present pity, will supply its place, and have the same apparent effect over our actions."

"Lucy and I have gone over that subject this morning," said William; "we neither convinced the other, though we tugged hard for this purpose: she, by a string of very ingenious argument, beats you both hollow."

“ For mercy’s sake !” rejoined George, “ don’t get her from her altitudes just now. She’s canvassing the altar-piece of West with Arran, who is blind as a beetle ; and, had he his eyes, understands no more of the matter than my dog Tray : and, for that very reason, painting is his favourite subject. Conscious of his deficiency, he thinks everybody discovers it ; and in the attempt to blind the world, becomes the herald of his own folly.”

“ Lower,” said William ; “ the hound has ears.”

“ Very true,” said his brother ; “ but nature gave him so large a portion of vanity, I defy you to mortify him.”

“ He

“ He is so tenderly attached to his person, Miss Mathews,” whispered William, “ that he sleeps in chicken gloves, washes his face with milk of roses, and never encounters the night air, but in a rocquellare and sedan. I have a good joke in store for the evening. He imagines he dances to a miracle; and I mean he shall have enough of it, for once in his life, to-night: for I have let half a dozen spirited girls into my plan, and they promise he shall not sit still for a minute. I enjoy the very idea: if he flags, Lucy and Charlotte are both in the plot, and he cannot escape; and then comes my finale. Lady Eleanor Palmington, the great heiress, vows she will, upon my giving

the cue, request him to dance a minuet: he shall be fit to ride his own race-horse next day, or never trust me for a plot again."

"Arran will weather it all," said George; "he is a very pocket Hercules."

"The Hercules!" said Mr. Arran, who had caught the last word; "do you mean the inestimable one on the right-hand, George?"

"No; I mean a very original one on the left-hand," he replied: which, as Mr. Arran sat in that situation to George, had tickled William's fancy most extremely. "What, George," said his brother, "that made up, patched-up; piece of goods?"

"Aye,

“ Aye, a fad daub !”

“ Why, you said it was an original !”
said Arran.

“ Yes, of a very bad master ! Not less an original for that, you know. The owner, I verily believe, is the only person who sets any store by it.”

Poor Louisa could scarcely avoid smiling, though she condemned satire, particularly in the house of the satirist—she thought it inhospitable, though the object was ignorant of it. She feared, lest the most insignificant proof of being entertained, should be construed into an approval of what, in her heart, she condemned.

After the first course, salvers of champagne, burgundy, &c. were brought

G 5

round;

round; when Lucy said—"Louisa, do taste champagne; I dare say you will like it." Every body's eyes were turned on Miss Mathews, who saw no rudeness in this speech; though the best part of the Montague family thought the remark was ill-natured, as it informed strangers, who were not entitled to know, that Louisa had not been much accustomed to gentlemen's tables, at least of a certain rank. From these circumstances, however trivial, Mr. Mathews foreboded his daughter would not be suffered to grow proud, without meeting a timely check from two ladies who seemed to seek for opportunities to humble her.

Mr.

Mr. Montague was the best calculated landlord to do the honours of his own table of any man I know: he promoted ease and chearfulness in his guests—he kept the most elegant establishment, and loved society—so that his table was generally filled with good company. To any man, for whom he had a particular esteem, he would say—“A plate is always to be laid for you: the oftener you come, the more you oblige me.” And as this conduct was never changed, unless it was merited, his friends were secure of passing a satisfactory day with a person whom to know and esteem was the same thing.

C H A P. XVII.

AS balls and suppers, when they come to be magnificent, are very much alike, I shall not describe the particulars of one truly superb, nor the pleasures it afforded to all the rank and fashion in town. I shall only mention a new trait of Charlotte's avidity to make known to her acquaintance the dependant situation of Miss Mathews, whose beauty and elegance made her the object of general admiration. The Marquis of Pearcefield was uttering a profusion of gallantry to Lucy, who had promised him her hand for a minuer, when Charlotte joined them on the

the same sofa. George had seized this moment to ask Miss Mathews to dance with him, some time in the course of the evening. "The first," said he, "I must encounter with Lady Eleanor Palmington; the second, with Lady Susan Forrester: but allow me to hope I shall be rewarded, for doing the duties of the evening, with your hand for the third."

She said, Miss Montague had encouraged her with approving a private exhibition in the morning, and made it a point with her to dance. She feared she should disgrace him; but, if he still had courage to lead her out, she was disengaged. She had only Mrs. Goodricke and her father to teach her; and she trembled at the idea of beginning.

"Graceful

“ Graceful in every thing you look, say, or move! why should you encourage the false idea that you can be otherwise, Miss Mathews?”

“ I fear, I shall soon convince you of your mistake, Sir.”

“ If that suffusion of cheek is occasioned by what you imagine to be a compliment, let me set you right. I do not mean it as such. I give you no merit for your unbounded attractions. You cannot be otherwise.”

She now thought that the wine had circulated pretty freely; and, joining Miss Montague, was beckoned by Charlotte from the opposite side of the room, who perceived the eyes of the Marquis to be fixed upon her as she moved; and
seeing

seeing him whisper Lucy, heard Charlotte reply—"She is daughter to Mathews, and companion to my sister, Miss Montague."—"She is pretty," said the Marquis, in a cool indifferent way.

"I think so," said Charlotte.—"I have forgot my handkerchief, Miss Mathews; it lays on my table—I'll trouble you for it."

"Does any body think otherwise of her?" said the Marquis.

"We have made converts of two," added Charlotte. "She is certainly handsome. I hope to God she does not mean to dance; for, I fear, she has had no opportunity of learning."

"Upon my soul," replied the Marquis, "it is a novelty to hear a beautiful

tiful woman allow another to be so, or to wish to preserve her from exposing herself!"

"I see you entertain very high notions of women in general; but I cannot enter into a defence of my sex just now.—The next time we meet, I shall take your lordship to task," said Charlotte, as the Marquis led out her sister.

The ball was opened by the Prince of Hesse and Miss Montague; the Duke of Portman and Charlotte; the Marquis and Lucy; the Duchess of Portman and William Montague; Lady Eleanor Palmington and George; Lady Susan Forrester and the Earl of Clifton; who danced the long minuet to admiration. I never saw it equalled in my

my life. They were, one and all, picked dancers. The Marquis was reckoned the first performer of a minuet in England; every movement was exquisite: and my reader may guess what I thought of it, when I acknowledge that, some years ago, I went thirty miles for the pleasure of seeing him in this situation.

When this unequalled set had concluded, country-dances began, and old Montague joined in the sport: when, asking the Duchefs of Portman to honour him, she declined it at first; but added—"I wish you would let me appoint a proxy. I am enraptured with that young lady in the French grey. She seems unnoticed. I wish you would lead her out; for I never beheld such a beautiful

beautiful creature!—For God's sake, who is she?"

"I'll lead her out first, and tell your Grace afterwards," replied Mr. Montague: and, to the unspeakable pleasure of her father, led out Louisa; who, feeling herself restored from the little rub Charlotte had given her, performed to a miracle. George was transcendantly happy. His father had conferred on Louisa a distinction, in the eyes of the company, he was anxious to obtain for her when he sought her hand for the third dance. This event was beyond his most sanguine expectations. At first, she felt abashed; but the encouraging nod of Eliza, who had observed, with infinite satisfaction, some of the pleasing

sing emotions which played about the heart of her brothers venerable tutor, caught the infection, and conveyed it to Louisa. During this dance, Lord Bellhammond made his appearance, and joined with the admirers of exquisite ease in praising the performance of Miss Mathews: and, however incredible the affirmation may appear to such readers as have never dwelt within the verge of a royal court, he had the astonishing confidence to walk up to Mr. Mathews, and compliment him upon the subject; who turned short upon his heel, and forbore a reply. An old lady thought Mathews was deaf; and, pulling his sleeve, told him Lord Bellhammond had approved of Louisa's dancing.

cing. "I know it," said he. And entered into conversation with Sir William Archer immediately; while the noble peer had that *within* which, thank God! I am not able to describe from experience.

C H A P. XVIII.

LADY Berkland had brought her son, Sir George, with her, who had unexpectedly arrived in town, from Oxford, on the previous evening. Since old Mr. Montague had condescended to dance with Miss Mathews, she thought it would not degrade her to be civil to her in the course of the evening. But an event, which stung her ladyship to the quick, soon put all these humane intentions to flight. Sir George had requested Eliza to ask *that lady*—pointing out Louisa—to dance with him; and Eliza had performed the commission with success. Louisa had not enquired
who

who the solicitor was, as Miss Montague's recommendation was sufficient with her: when the baronet's mother was shocked to behold her son lead forth, in the eyes of all the world of distinction, a little country girl, whom nobody knew—the daughter of a man in orders, it was true, but without a penny of preferment; an itinerant parson—as she was pleased to call him, in confidence to her friends—who travelled and taught for a livelihood. She wondered at Sir George's meanness, and the wench's presumption! A man of Sir George's rank and *fashion*—

Miss Montague saw Lady Berkland look *distracte*; and, as her ladyship's eyes were levelled full at the offenders,

she

she required no great penetration to discover the cause. Without one spark of pride—save that which would preserve her from the commission of a mean or little action—she, nevertheless, pitied any person who was afflicted with this tyrannical disease. She saw the pain and torment it gave it's possessors; and, from universal benevolence, wished to apply some relief even to pangs which deserve no commiseration. She accordingly reserved a lady of quality for Sir George's partner, after the two dances were over: and asking Mr. Mathews whether he believed Louisa could venture a minuet, as she had a particular reason for the question; he replied, he had no fears upon the occasion, as Miss Mathews had

had learnt of one of the best masters—and frequently practised with his daughter in the country; who had caught their manner so exactly, that she was, in fact, *Vidonis scholat*. She then requested Lord Haleborough to lead her out; which management had the desired effects of restoring Lady Berkland's feelings to their original harmony, and bringing forth an almost unequalled talent in her diffident friend, for whom she already felt the sincerest regard. At twelve o'clock, a most splendid supper occasioned a pause to the dancers of a very agreeable nature: at half past one it was, however, resumed, and continued till four; when the company departed, most thoroughly satisfied with the entertainment

ertainment of the evening; one circumstance alone having interfered to suspend their pleasure for a moment—the indisposition of Mr. Arran, who had received the full exercise both George and William Montague had so assiduously marked out for him. At the ninth dance he was *cooked* completely; at the tenth, he was absolutely *dished*; and, at the twelfth, he was quite *done up*. The ladies entreated; but some humane tabby, at Arran's elbow, always brought him off, by advising him to recover himself during another dance; and the pre-determined tormentors were obliged to relinquish their sport, till William had the ill-nature, or fun—which you please—to apply to the forlorn hope,

the rich, the handsome, the satirical heiress of Palmington; who, pretending not to know Mr. Arran had been unwell, assured him, she had determined to dance her second minuet with him, as she had told the Marquis of Pearcefield, who was half enraged at her for refusing him. Had this poor unfortunate devil had but one leg, he would have accepted the challenge of Lady Eleanor Palmington, as he devoutly believed it would make him the envy of half the men in the room. The temptation, like all other temptations not withstood, was soon followed by repentance; for, in the middle of the performance, he fainted away on the floor, which caused an alarm: however,
he

he speedily recovered; was placed in a chair; and, in a couple of days, was not only able, but, I verily believe, willing, to exhibit a person he had the highest possible opinion of, notwithstanding the proof he had had of it's frailty.

CHAP. XIX.

THE morning arrived ; when the sisters of the Montagues, and daughter of Mathews, were assembled in the breakfast-parlour, to bid these dear connections adieu ! George's eyes were excessively swoln, which he attributed to want of sleep ; but a tremulous voice betrayed they had *another* cause for being so. They took frequent but transient views of Louisa, who caught them upon her : she felt a confusion she could not account for ; but she had little leisure to ask herself the question. The parting with her father, she verily believed, was the sole cause of a more
cruel

cruel depression of spirits than yet she had ever experienced. Her father felt the conviction, that the unusual weight which lay on his mind, was alone occasioned by quitting a child, infinitely more dear to him from the sorrow she had caused at her birth, which dwelt on his mind with a tender remembrance, making description bankrupt. There is a sympathy in amiable minds which renders language unnecessary. Louisa's eye read, with avidity, what passed in her father's mind. "Can I ever make my loved parent amends," said she, "for what I have cost him? Let me hope the power will, at some period not very distant, be in proportion to the inclination my heart has ever felt."

She stood with her father at the window; when George, from the opposite side, had rivetted his eyes on this captivating object of paternal affection. Old Montague had sent for Mathews and his sons to step into his room, as he never rose till eleven o'clock. George lingered behind for an instant—a paleness spread over his countenance. He staggered to the window Louisa still remained in; and with an emotion he tried to suppress, said—“I am going, Miss Mathews! but my mind will attend upon *you*, and my prayers be offered up for *your* happiness. If I have said too much, pardon me—you know not the pangs my soul feels at this crisis, most amiable of women!

May

May your happiness be proportioned to your merits."

God knows whether she wished to have interrupted him in this speech, but she certainly had not the power: the steps of a female, close to the door, brought George to the recollection of his father's message.

It was Miss Montague who now made her appearance. "Exert yourself, my dear Louisa, lest your tears distress your father; they are most natural: I have but to place myself in your situation to feel it—in my own, to respect your sorrows. If friendship can render them transient, they will be so.—Mr. Mathews," said she, as he entered the room, "let us make a bargain: every

attention you pay my brothers, shall be paid twofold to Louisa by me."

"And every kindness Mr. Montague shews to my father, shall be registered in my heart, and be discharged in prompt payments of gratitude."

"Every thing is ready," said the servant to Mathews, who took Eliza's hand.—"God bless Miss Montague!"

She put forth her cheek—"God bless you, my friend! may we all be collected together again, to tell over the events of your travels."

Both Lucy and Charlotte followed Eliza's example. "A good notion!" said William; "let it go through." He saluted Miss Mathews; while the diffident George had scarcely power to follow

follow the steps of his younger brother : a universal tremor communicated itself from him to the weeping Louisa. Unobserved, she shrunk from his ardent gaze ; and, leaning on her father's arm, accompanied him to the door of the chaise. The child and parent again embraced ; and the carriage was in motion.

Am I tedious in this relation ? Acknowledge it not, if I am. If ye have ever known the extatic endearment of parental affection—if ye have ever felt the undescribable thrill of perfect, chaste, and honourable passion—if ye have ever enjoyed the social hours of domestic love, in the very bosom of friendship—ye will not only pardon, but ap-

H 5

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prove, the minutes I have devoted to a scene which must fall to the share of every human creature in the journey of life.

CHAP.

C H A P. XX.

IN five minutes time, both Lucy and Charlotte had forgotten the few tears which dimmed their eyes, at bidding farewell to their brothers. Poor Eliza! I might have included her, also, had not the weeping Louisa excited her's longer from sympathy. Miss Mathews persuaded herself, that her tears flowed for her father; but, indeed, though half unknown to herself, they would have dried some hours earlier, had not the recollection of what George had so despondingly uttered dwelt in her mind. His tone of voice still vibrated in her

H 6

ear;

ear; his attitude was impressed on her eye; and every word he had spoken engraved on her heart. The girls had proposed a walk in Kensington Gardens, to wear off the length of a day so damp at the beginning; and the carriage was ordered at two: at which time, Eliza was to be set down at Lady Berkland's, who had told her, on the preceding night, that she had something particular to say to her, and begged her to name her time, which she accordingly did as above. As soon as the ladies were ready—which was half an hour beyond the time of appointment—Eliza fulfilled the remainder of her engagement; and found her friend impatiently waiting her arrival, to perform a commission

commission Lord Bellhammond had requested of her to communicate to Miss Montague some days ago: which was, to propose a most eligible offer to Miss Mathews; and which, out of regard to his niece, Miss Eglingtown, he was anxious to have attended with success. She was an heiress of good fortune, who had hitherto been bred up at Mrs. Terry's school, at Kensington; for the two last years of which she had been a parlour-boarder: but, as she had now attained her seventeenth year, her uncle and guardian, Lord Bellhammond, had thoughts of taking her home, to do the honours of his house. In this situation, she required an elegant woman, to be as her friend, and to attend her
to

to all public places; for which she should receive one hundred a year, and have every attention paid her, the same as his niece: and he lamented so much to find that Eliza had engaged Miss Mathews, that it had almost broken his lordship's plan; and Miss Eglingtown was afraid that her uncle would continue her where she now was for another year; which induced Lady Berkland to comfort the girl, by offering to talk over the matter with Miss Montague. "I know you wish to promote every body's welfare," said she; "and therefore I mention these particulars: but Louisa has still a claim upon me, to do her a service when I can, for she is

is my god-daughter. I suppose you know that?"

"No! Miss Mathews never mentioned that."

"I wonder at it!" said her ladyship: "she has so much pride, that I wonder she could conceal any circumstance that did her honour. Her father was tutor to my son—I dismissed him at a moment's warning. He kept the child—as he then was—from his dinner near two hours beyond his time, because he had not begged pardon of one of the servants, of whom he had unthinkingly told an untruth. But I now bear him no resentment, nor yet his child: I wish to serve her, as I have already said. Do you decide for her, Miss Montague?"

"Im-

“Impossible, Madam! I will, as the salary is so large, mention it's advantages to Louisa; but she alone can decide. I shall regret the parting with her; but I will not tell her so, which will enable her to take that station she likes best: for I have no reason to believe her father would hesitate about placing her in a family equally unexceptionable with our own.”

“Lord Bellhammond is a very saint upon earth!—his character is a sanctioned one—a wife living, though separated, and the niece in the house!”

“Very true; but I have my doubts whether Louisa will think with us.—Your ladyship shall know the result.”

The

The relation of this was necessary to my history ; and the same regard to the thread which weaves it, carries me into Kensington Gardens ; where the other Miss Montagues and Louisa were walking, attended by the Marquis of Pearcefield, Sir William Archer, and Sir George Berkland, who had both fortunately and accidentally joined the other two gentlemen, five minutes before the ladies made their appearance. He had received so severe a rating from his noble mother, in her way home from Miss Montague's ball, for dancing with a low creature, that he meant not to get in Miss Mathews's way, believing that a few interviews would endanger his peace, for so lovely a being he had
never

never beheld. He thought, the first impression she had made upon him was more serious than he had ever experienced from all the fine eyes of Oxford; and, convinced that it was possible to be in love at first sight, and to be miserable in consequence of it, he resolved to avoid her while he had strength to do so.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

SCARCE had he joined the Marquis and Sir William Archer, when the former began with—"Damme, Berkland, for your luck last night! I was just at liberty to ask that exquisite creature to dance—having got rid of Lucy Montague, whom I compare to a burr, she sticks so close!—when I heard you engage her. Who and what is she, for God's sake? One moment, I understood she was a dependant—the next, I saw old Montague lead her out. These are such contradictions, I cannot reconcile them!"

"I take

“ I take it, she’s fair game !” said Sir William Archer. “ Lucy Montague sent her of errands; and expressed herself hurt at her father’s forgetting himself, as she termed it. She is either the steward or housekeeper’s daughter, I fancy.—From Charlotte, I learnt her father was a domestic.”

“ True,” replied Sir George: “ her father is a domestic, but a very good gentleman. Mr. Mathews was son to a man of very ancient family and great property; but, all at once, they were cruelly reduced by the chances of rebellion. The estate was destroyed by the Pretender’s party; and the owner was so miserable at beholding the destruction of a mansion he had raised himself, that
his

his senses forlook him. He married—I mean, Miss Mathews's father—his own first cousin ; who was a woman of uncommon beauty, and more attached to her lover from his unexpected misfortunes. She died in child-bed of this girl ; which is her true history, believe me. Mr. Mathews was my tutor formerly, and a worthier man never existed."

" I am glad," said the Marquis, " I have such authority for my intelligence; for, " Who is she?" is a common enquiry."

Here they were agreeably surprized to meet with the Miss Montagues and their charming friend; who, though she looked lovely on the preceding evening

to

to an uncommon degree, appeared infinitely more so by day-light: but, had the charms of person been spared her, there was a something irresistibly pleasing in her voice and manner to a man of a contemplative turn of mind. She had a conscious dignity in her nature, which was evident in every thing she said; and the tender recollection of the morning scene had diffused a soft languor over her whole frame, which awakened in every bosom a kindred sympathy. Vain were all the resolutions Sir George Berkland had formed to forget her: this was not a time for reflection. He suffered himself to converse with Louisa; and, in doing so, he put it out of his own power to make a retreat.

retreat. To Sir William Archer, who was a man of much observation, and not easily involved in the labyrinth of love, it was evident that, while the Marquis of Pearcefield paid the most lavish compliments to Lucy, his whole attention was taken up by Louisa. But, schooled in art, he knew he must assume a marked preference to the Miss Montagues, to insure him a ready and frequent access to Louisa: a matter of great consequence, at a time when they were preparing to go to their summer residence; which, being only at the distance of thirteen miles from the metropolis, was accessible to their friends in London, on occasions of dinners and balls. Four
o'clock

o'clock reminded the ladies they had still a little toileting to undergo ; and, being handed to their carriage by the beaus, they departed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

IN the evening, Miss Montague took an opportunity of relating to Louisa every particular which had occurred in the conversation between her and Lady Berkland; and, premising it with an assurance of friendship and esteem, concluded with saying, she could not justify the withholding such an offer of advancement from Miss Mathews, though the communication of it militated against her own interest. She then, without having any motive but Louisa's benefit in view, related the whole; and received in answer, what

she had partly expected, a negative from Louisa; yet, as she considered that this situation would be in every respect advantageous to her friend, she conceived that she ought to try to serve her, even against her own interest.

“Notwithstanding your determination, Miss Mathews,” said Eliza, “I must mark out to you the extreme benefits attending the double salary. My father gives you fifty; Miss Eglintown one hundred; and the sooner you are able to be independent, my dear girl, the sooner will you be loved and respected by the world: for I am sorry to observe, that those who have the greatest claims for kindness, meet the fewest marks of it—I mean, those who essentially want it.

it. To convince you of my sincere attachment to you, I disclose what relates to myself, as in some degree it involves you. In August, I become Lord Haleborough's property; and I will ingenuously own to you, that I think nature has rendered you dangerous, by a thousand amiable attractions, for a young married woman, whose husband is bred up in the fashionable libertinism of the times, to ask you to live with her. Good God, Louisa! sure I have said nothing to imply a want of confidence in you!—Why that tear?"

"I do not humble myself so far as to have one idea of the kind—far from it. I am interested in a double sense upon this occasion—for your happiness,

I 2

and

and for my own fate. And Miss Montague asks, why my tears flow? If marriage deprives me of your protection, have I not cause?"

"But though it must of necessity, my dear Louisa, separate us, it will not lessen our friendship, or the extreme desire I shall always have to render you services. Let me remind you, that Lord Bellhammond is a character distinguished as a moral man: in every point of view, his house, with his niece to preside at the head of his table, would be an unexceptionable asylum for any body. His wife is living; but from her unfortunate temper, which rendered him and herself wretched, they found the necessity of being amicable on one subject

subject at least : they united in the wish to divide; and she lives wholly at Twickenham, irreproachable in every respect but temper. And, God knows, there cannot be a greater reproach to a creature stiled *rational*! You know, I am a stranger to the difference that gave birth to your dislike of Lord Bellhammond; I therefore reason in the dark : but allow me to say, that the sooner these memorials are wiped from the mind, the better. Let us postpone our answer for a few days, till you have revolved the benefits arising from this disinterested offer of Miss Eglintown's in your mind."

" Ah, Madam! was it indeed Miss Eglintown's offer, I should surely embrace

brace it, when fate, peculiarly kind to Lord Haleborough, made you his wife. To be longer mysterious with you, would be wrong; but most earnestly do I entreat you, Madam, to retain in your own breast the reasons which would make me prefer indigence to the most splendid establishment my lord *could* give me. I wish not to injure him in the opinion of his friends; and such, I see, you all are: and as I am convinced my arguments will be conclusive with you, and reverse your favourable sentiments of Lord Bellhammond, I exact a solemn promise, that you do not communicate them to any individual whatever, without my permission."

" Upon

“ Upon my honour, Louisa, I will not—Rest secure, I will not.”

“ However mortifying it may be to make a confession of the humiliation my mind has experienced, I will hasten to give you the clue to my hatred and detestation of this *moral* man. He found me lodged with a woman whose necessities, he hoped, might be sufficiently urgent to tempt her to place the child she had been entrusted with by a fond and doating parent into his iniquitous hands. For two years past he has made every shameless and artful attempt to corrupt her integrity; which, thank God! was impenetrable. From his first infamous overtures to serve me, by placing me out as companion to an old lady of

fashion, to the present instant, I have never willingly staid in the room where this wicked wretch has had a seat. Mrs. Goodricke has always received him with coolness; but to offend him she dreaded, for she is his tenant. At length, he has had recourse to letters; and with indignation I relate, that they contained proposals to induce me to live with him. Guess, then, whether I abhor him!"

"You have astonished me, Louisa! Can this be possible! I protest to you, it requires all my faith to credit you.—I thought him a saint!"

"And well, Madam, you might!—for I listened to his conversation with you some mornings ago, which he had
adapted

adapted to your turn of mind in so perfect a manner, that my heart called him detestable hypocrite. I have this day received a letter from Mrs. Goodricke, who tells me he has again been tampering with her; and assuring her, that the reason he still was anxious to have any thing to say to me was, the particular partiality Miss Eglintown had conceived for me, and the desire she had to have me her friend: that, for his own part, he should not have tried to serve his dear niece upon this occasion, unless he had been going abroad for two years.

“ At first, the poor woman believed him; but, upon enquiry, she found his new office in the royal household obliged

him to residence. As to Miss Eglington, though she is his sister's child, he has never taken any notice of her whatever till now; when he trusts, that his apparent kindness to her may facilitate his designs upon me.

“ When I entreated my father to let me continue with my old friend, who has been quite a parent to me, she acquainted my father with some slight intimation of Lord Bellhammond's visits; and her fears, that he was a worthless man. To this communication was owing my father's marked contempt of him at your ball; and my inexplicable conduct—as he termed it—when he proffered the living of Fair Lawn.”

“ The mystery is perfectly unravelled
now,

now, my dear. You have, indeed, made me a convert to your opinion. I am shocked at his baseness! and fear I shall betray my being acquainted with his arts; though I will study, in compliance with my promised secrecy, not to shew my contempt of him. Should he persecute you by any farther pursuit, threaten the hypocritical wretch to acquaint my father instantly; for, as you are under our protection, the insult is to *us* as well as to you. Though I am about to change my home, Louisa, my sisters are not; and even if they did, by a like revolution in their fates and fortunes, my father's protection, I am sure, is perfectly unexceptionable."

"Most truly so, most respectable!"

His kindness to me, in a thousand little things, demand and receive my gratitude. He is the proper father of such a daughter as Miss Montague. The highest praise I can give him—”

“ Ah! you flatterer!—But you say nothing of another person, not *very* disagreeable, in my opinion.”

“ It is for fear you should think me a flatterer, that I was silent; but, since you mark it, I will speak my mind freely. He is the most pleasing man I have yet seen here. I found out his propensities on the first evening I saw him.”

“ Did you, in truth, now?—Do you think he likes me?—Why did not you tell me so?—This is charming, if you really

really discovered it! for I am sometimes uneasy."

"Could I take the liberty of informing Miss Montague at such a time? Had I been so bold, I *might* also have told her, that I perceived his lordship's attentions were not *very* unpleasant to her."

"I hope that idea is in consequence of my previous confession; for somebody says—" That love refines a man's behaviour, but renders a woman ridiculous."

"Pray, don't make yourself uneasy on that subject. Lord Haleborough's assiduities were of a nature to be smilingly received, or frowningly rejected. Had they been troublesome, you had
opportu-

opportunity for marking that they were so. In these cases, there is no neutrality, I think."

"As William says to Charlotte, "you are very knowing, my dear!— But how shall we manage about this hypocrite Peer? Shall I say to Lady Berkland, that you prefer your present situation? There is no apology necessary for declining the offer; and, as to the part *she* takes in *your* interest, you have had the experience of eighteen years. Though I have candidly given you my reasons for not continuing you with me when I marry, though I am not of a jealous nature, yet I should think I led my husband's heart into the way of temptation; and, as that is my real persuasion,

persuasion, I should do wrong to let any circumstance prevail upon me to run so immense a risque. But, believe me, my dear Louisa, should any thing arise in this house, after my leaving it, disagreeable to you, I shall consider you as chargeable on my purse till your father's return. I will deliver you safe into his hands; for I see what reason he has for valuing the deposit he made in mine."

A loud rap at the house-door carried the ladies instantly into the tea-room.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXIII.

THE visitors, whom this formidable knock had announced, were Lady Eleanor Palmington, Miss Eglington, Lords Bellhammond and Haleborough, who were come with the express intention of carrying off all the Montague family to Ranelagh, as the evening was uncommonly fine; and the fire-works, which were prevented by rain on the king's birth-night, were to be exhibited at eleven o'clock. To this proposal the parties most readily acceded, and passed the two intermediate hours in music and conversation. As there were five of Mr. Montague's family,

mily, Miss Eglintown proposed that Louisa, whom she seemed to have conceived the greatest partiality for, should go in her uncle's carriage; which, through the aid of Miss Montague, was resisted, without it's carrying the appearance of particular design to any person but the noble Peer, who well understood *why* any opposition was made. It was at length settled, that Mr. Montague should escort Lady Eleanor, Miss Eglintown, Lucy, and Miss Mathews; and accordingly they entered their carriages in this order, and found their party considerably encreased by a set Lady Eleanor had previously informed of her intentions. The great fortune this lady possessed, operated still more powerfully

powerfully than her personal attractions in making these intimations attended to. She was addressed by the best part of the fashionable men in town; but, without shewing any decided partiality for *one*, she continued to flirt with *all*. It was nevertheless a received opinion, that George Montague was destined for the valuable prize, as his father was guardian to the lady; and the frequent intercourse and friendly familiarity which subsisted between them, corroborated the general opinion. In truth, the lady's affections did lean towards this amiable man, who had been bred up with an idea that they were designed for each other: but, as this event always appeared at a distance, he had scarcely

ever

ever bestowed one serious thought upon the subject; which, if it demonstrates the absence of love, demonstrates also the absence of hate.

George was now a few months turned of twenty-one, Lady Eleanor twenty-two; and, though the advantage of years was on the wrong side, yet gold, like love, levelled the distinction.

Miss Mathews had heard, on the ball-night, that things were in this train; which made her seriously determine to banish those sentences from her recollection which George, with an uncommon degree of pathos, had poured into her ear. She thought his conduct most inhumanly ungenerous, to endeavour to
awaken

awaken her regard for him, when he was destined to be united to another; and, with the additional reflection upon her own humble condition, she effected that desirable conquest over the mind, to drive the obtruding idea from thence. the instant she was conscious it had taken possession.

With what unremitting diligence did she try to awaken this consciousness! for here lay the difficulty. In the midst of the present gaieties, she gave a loose to reflection; and, with particular scrutiny, examined and attended to whatever came from the lips of Lady Eleanor. Every one of the party seemed so happily engaged, that they had little leisure to attend to her; Lord Bellhammond excepted,

excepted, who addressed her with an entreaty to forego, for one single five minutes, her haughty indifference, or rather scorn, and to hear an explanation of his conduct.

“ Had your lordship said an *expiation* even, I should have excused myself,” replied she, with disdain; and tried to join Eliza: but she was prevented by him—“ You must positively hear me, Madam; it is a debt due to common justice.”

“ The debt, my lord, due to common justice, would lead me to lay open your conduct to Mr. Montague. I *have* heard from Mrs. Goodricke—Torment me not, and I will conceal the past!—But, if I am persecuted with solicitations

tions of *any* kind, even to become the friend and companion of your niece, I will enable Mr. Montague to judge of you *fairly*."

" Pretty severe, my lovely tyrant!— If the sincerest, most ardent attachment, heightened by the insuperable obstacle to an holy union at *present*, but sanctioned by my most solemn intentions to marry you, whenever that obstacle is done away, can plead in your bosom for pardon and forgiveness to an offending and adoring lover—"

" My lord, mortification at being the object of your insulting address, must withhold my tongue. Compulsion, not inclination, has compelled me to hear you. Was you at liberty to marry
me—

me—a horror I hate even to *imagine*!—I would reject you, though indigence and misery stared me in the face!—My lord, you have your answer.”

“ Miss Mathews, I will settle upon you eight hundred a year for your life; if that is too little, name your own terms. I give you *carte blanche*.”

“ I shall despise myself, my lord, if I can make any farther reply to you,” said Louisa, as they sat down to tea. He had grace to quit her side, and take, next to the Marquis of Pearcefield, the opposite seat; while Sir George Berkland was again in the place of danger—for such it truly was to be in the society of Miss Mathews.

Mathews. Her conversation had such charms for a man of his sentimental cast, that it was vain to contend with the passion he had already conceived. All his resolutions to avoid her were now relinquished; and being independant, and in possession of five-and-twenty hundred a year, he determined to pursue the path most likely to conduct him to happiness. He suffered not a thought of his mother's disapprobation to blight the blossoms of hope which now flourished in his bosom; but resolved next day to wait on Miss Montague, as the particular friend of Louisa, and explain his intentions: trusting that, as she had been so shortly in town, she had no prior
at-

attachment to bias her mind ; and, believing that his proposals might be attended to, he indulged the extatic hope of calling her soon by his name.

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CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

THE delirium he was in was too visible to the penetrating eyes of Lord Bellhammond to escape detection. The noble lord now imagined, that the rigid austerity of Louisa was owing to a rooted attachment to a rival—not to a keen abhorrence of vice—and his whole soul was now engrossed by the persuasion that, to destroy the mutual regard they appeared through the medium of jealousy to have for each other, was to effect his own purpose by disposing Louisa to listen to what he conceived to be most advantageous offers. No sooner was this diabolical project planned,

ned, than he set about the performance of the task, by telling Lady Berkland Louisa was throwing out all her lures to entrap the young baronet; professing, that he could have no interest in disclosing the danger Sir George was in, and therefore she must make her own use of his friendly intimation. Violence and vulgarity are often united; and, in the present case, they were peculiarly so. Her ladyship could not contain herself sufficiently to make her own observations, or suppress her instantaneous resentment of her son's meanness, and Louisa's presumption. She took hold of Sir George's arm; and, in a tremulous voice, protested she *could* endure his conduct no longer with pa-

tience: to be civil to Miss Montague's *companion*, was *one* thing; but, to dangle at her elbow the whole night, was quite *another*—"Of all things in the world, avoid low company!" said she.

"Louisa knows no better, or she would not let you bemean yourself!—A person of your *rank* and *fashion*, Sir George—"

Louisa was absolutely confounded. She burst into tears; yet tried to controul them, lest they should occasion a keen reply from Sir George to his mother: but he felt so ashamed of Lady Berkland's extraordinary address to himself, as well as Miss Mathews, that he had little power to make a reply. He made his mother a most profound bow, and directly quitted Ranelagh.

The

The Marquis remarked to Lucy, that Miss Mathews was certainly weeping; her voice had betrayed her. Lucy immediately offered the lovely girl her arm; and, in an affectionate manner, insisted upon returning home with her directly, if she was not well. She thanked her for her kindness; and related the extraordinary adventure above-mentioned.

“Don’t mind the old cat,” said Lucy; “she hates every thing young or pretty: so, I pray you, be flattered by her hatred, as I am. I’ll guard you against her vulgarity for the night.—Lord Bellhammond, lend Louisa your arm, and bid the old cat defiance.—Take it, my dear—don’t be a prude!”

Extremely embarrassed at this proposition, but still more so at the confidence of Lord Bellhammond, who directly offered his arm, Louisa excused herself; saying—"I will not give her malignant spirit food for slander, by walking arm in arm with any body. Allow me to keep with you, and I shall be safe." But the Marquis added—"It shall be my province, Miss Mathews, to guard you from her warlike attacks on one side, while your amiable friend retains her present post." In this manner did she pass a more comfortable hour than she had hitherto done; and, at it's expiration, they returned home, to the no small joy of Louisa.

When in the carriage, which now
contained,

contained only Mr. Montague's family, Louisa related, at Lucy's request, the whole conversation which passed at Ranelagh; and added that, upon her word and honour, Sir George Berkland's discourse had principally been about the charms of a country life, Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield, and the influence of example: that she did not recollect even one speech of compliment to awaken Lady Berkland's fears for either party. "Heaven knows," said she, "his virago mother would operate as an antidote to any affection my heart could conceive for her son, notwithstanding I think him uncommonly pleasing."

Mr. Montague was much vexed at

the rudeness offered to Miss Mathews by Lady Berkland; and declared, that he would resent it as it deserved. "My near relation," said he, "took it in his head, Louisa, to marry the daughter of his laundress, which is this great lady's origin, and accounts for her insufferable pride. We leave town so soon, that I have little leisure to mark my disapprobation as strongly as I really feel it. But be secure: I will humble her for it."

Louisa assured him, she did not set her heart on revenge. It was a maxim with her to write injuries in sand, and to grave kindnesses on marble. "You, my dear Sir, will make me an excel-

lent

lent graver in time," said she, as she departed for the night to her own chamber.

CHAP. XXV.

THE morning was productive of much pleasure to all parties, who were gratified in seeing several letters on the breakfast-table from different correspondents; who were, nevertheless, neglected, till two packets from the Montagues, and Mr. Mathews, had been read over twice. The travellers gave the best account of themselves, with a particular description of all they had seen worthy of observation; and bid the family expect, that the next letters would be dated from Geneva. The English ambassador at Paris had made their residence there, for the few days, extremely

extremely agreeable; and promoted their admission into several places, difficult of access without his intervention.

Louisa had, also, one from her father, expressive of all his tenderness for her; and conjuring her, during the whole term of his long absence, to remember her promise of relating every circumstance which affected her. For example, he would tell her of a trifle which she knew he would at any other time have concealed, lest it should have caused her uneasiness; but now it would convince her, how strictly he meant to adhere to his promise—*bona fide*. He had slipped some length down the ship's side into the boat, which had sprained his right-leg; but that the care of his

excellent young friends, and prescription of Mr. George Montague's, applied with his own hand, had almost perfectly restored him to ease.

If Louisa's distress at the accident required relief, she instantaneously received it by learning that *George* had been particularly kind to her father. The unusual glow the latter information occasioned, and her liquid eye, created Eliza's concern for her; which, however, she already knew the cause of, as *George*, in his letter to his sister, had related the event, and condemned Mathews for refusing to be bled at the time. But this information concluded with saying—"He is now very well again." A kind of involuntary mistrust on
Louisa's

Louisa's face procured her a sight of the letter, which was exactly as Miss Montague related it; and, attached to this article, she read—"P. S. Make his charming daughter quite easy; for I will look after her father myself." The new blushes, which arose at this article, disappeared, for a while, that stoic indifference she endeavoured to obtain. But the cause of this transition in her countenance was differently interpreted by her friends, who placed them only to her father's account.

While they were yet at the table, Lady Berkland entered the room with very little ceremony; and, just barely curtsying to the Montagues, addressed Miss Mathews with a request, that she
would

would inform her where her son Sir George was.

“ Good God, Madam !” said the astonished Louisa, “ how should I know ?”

“ No prevarication, child ! your snares are discovered ; and I insist upon it that you instantly inform me of his rendezvous.—A pretty thing, indeed, to create a quarrel between me and my son !”

“ Lady Berkland ! Lady Berkland !” said Mr. Montague, “ I am surprized at your ladyship’s conduct ! Miss Mathews, Madam, is under my protection, and shall not be insulted in my house. Have a care how you provoke my resentment ! The idea originated in your
own

own whirligig brain, Madam. Sir George was only commonly polite to Louisa; and you conjured up a phantom to distress both him and Louisa, by supposing she has a design to ensnare him."

"To seduce him from his duty, Sir, I have the best information, is her plan.—I forbid you, Miss Mathews, to presume to exchange a sentence with Sir George Berkland.—A man of his *rank* and *fashion*—"

Mr. Montague furiously pulled the bell. "Order Lady Berkland's carriage instantly!" said he to the servant.—"Madam, when you know how to behave in a manner becoming the widow of my relation, you shall again have admittance here."

Louisa

Louisa was like to sink off her chair. The three girls were little less frightened. "Hear me, Lady Berkland!" said she. "I protest, Sir George has never made any advances to me."

"I know that, minx!—Do you think a man of his *rank* and *fashion* could have serious thoughts of an upstart dependant?"

Mr. Montague again rang the bell. "Out of my house instantly, Madam! You compel me to use you thus! I regard Louisa too well to let her connect herself with even the *worthy* son of a fury!"

"A fury, Sir!"

"Not another word, Lady Berkland. There is the door—" And he led her to
it;

it; while she, choaking with rage, protested Louisa should be compelled, upon oath, to declare where her son was hid.

Any spirits in the world would have sunk under such an unexpected attack. Not all the fun and good-humour, blended with concern of her friends, could raise Louisa from a dejection throughout the remainder of the day. The Montagues concluded the old lady was deranged; for they were ignorant of Lord Bellhammond's secret information, as he had insisted upon it his name should not be mentioned. Nothing farther was heard of Sir George, or his mother, till the following evening; when the baronet made his appearance in Cavendish Square,

to make his apologies for his mother's most extraordinary conduct. "I am too much hurt," said he, "to see her, Mr. Montague. I have never been at home since the Ranelagh night. Perhaps I was too precipitate in quitting the rotunda as I did; but I know nothing but flight secures my mother from exposing her violent temper."

"Had you given her cause for suspicion, Sir George," said Eliza, "it had not been so wonderful."

"In my words, Madam, I certainly did *not*. Difficult as it is to suppress admiration at whatever falls from the lips of Miss Mathews, I still withheld it: though, previous to Lady Berkland's charge, I had determined to endeavour
to

to render myself agreeable to your charming friend; and to seek your approbation, Mr. Montague, of my visits. I *then* meant to apply privately to you, Sir, for your interest with the most amiable of her sex; but I *now* express myself, without hesitation, before your whole family."

"I begin, Sir George, to think you are crazy as well as your mother," said Montague. "Why, you are a strange man, to take a girl without fortune!—Speak for yourself, my girl! You are the best judge whether Sir George's offers proceed from love, or spite.—Don't think of the harradan!"

"Mr. Montague—Sir—" said Sir George.

Mr.

Mr. Montague instantly apologized—
“ Upon my life, Sir George, I ask your pardon sincerely. I had forgot myself—be assured that I did not mean to use so strong an expression.”

“ It is enough,” he replied. “ Am I permitted to call at Richmond? I request your sanction, dear Sir.”

“ It is granted, Sir George. My daughters will be happy to see you, whenever you have inclination to ride.—And my girl, Louisa, what say you? You are one of the family, child. You should express a welcome to my friends.”

“ The same friendly welcome that the Miss Montagues express to Sir George, I shall feel—more is out of my power.

This

"This is not casually said, but designedly. I will explain myself farther to Sir George, when I have spirits for the purpose. I should be unworthy the partiality he honours me with, could I be ambiguous, or suffer him to imagine I was undetermined on a point on which I am quite decided. Pardon me, my good friends, and let us change the subject."

Sir George instantly did so, by enquiring whether she had yet heard from her father, and where he was at the time his letter was dated. Mr. Montague asked him to supper; and the evening passed over their heads with gaiety and good-humour. Sir George attended to Eliza's particular entreaty, to wait on
his

his mother next day; which, being urged also by Louisa, the enamoured, doating lover, promised to acquiesce with,

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

SOME days after their being at Richmond, a penitential letter arrived from Lady Berkland, to entreat forgiveness for her hasty resentment of her son's conduct; and to acknowledge that, upon due consideration, her fears concerning Sir George's attachment to Mathews's girl were unfounded. That she was heartily ashamed of her passion in Cavendish Square; and, to prove that she was so, she wished to be permitted to converse for five minutes with Mr. Montague, when she had proposals to make, about her godchild Louisa, of a most advantageous nature.

Mr.

Mr. Montague was now convinced, that Sir George's rhetoric had won over the mother to his wishes; and, believing that Louisa's answer to Sir George would be reversed in consequence of Lady Berkland's approbation, he submitted to the interview, which he would not have done but to serve Louisa, who was thoroughly convinced, that some new scheme of Lord Bellhammond's induced the mother of Sir George to volunteer this visit. Eliza, who was well acquainted with this nobleman's designs, was of the same opinion; while the rest of the family, who were ignorant of this *moral* man's pursuits, were decidedly of one persuasion upon the
sub-

subject, that Lady Berkland had entered into her son's views.

Three days, however, elapsed, when her ladyship was enabled to meet Mr. Montague at his town house; and, to convince him his conjectures were wrong, she brought the subject of Miss Eglington's partiality for Louisa immediately upon the tapis, and explained the nature of Lord Bellhammond's *unexceptionable* offer; which Mr. Montague had scarcely patience to listen to, as he felt extremely angry with him for employing any agent, when he was upon the most intimate footing imaginable with the family. In the second place, he thought it a mean action, to try to entice his daughter's companion

with an augmented salary, which he did not know Louisa would withstand. He felt in an awkward situation: as, while he withheld her from accepting this stipend, her father *might* think he acted in an interested manner; or, by allowing her to follow this advantageous increase of income, Mr. Mathews *might* think he repented of his promise to take care of her. He let Lady Berkland know his mind in a rougher manner than was usual with him, for he had conceived a disgust at her conduct; and the disappointment he received, in finding she had not given her permission to Sir George, had soured his temper; we will own, rather unjustly, as she was ignorant

norant of her son's determination to address Louisa. Her ladyship's penitential letter acknowledged she had reversed her former opinion relative to Sir George's affections. Mr. Montague requested her not to interfere at all in the disposal of Miss Mathews, or take any trouble about her : Louisa was a match for any man in the kingdom, notwithstanding pecuniary wants. Lady Berland knew that she was, and was she not? the remark came from her ladyship with a very ill grace. He should use no ceremony with her, as she had forgot all that was due to him; and therefore he should own, that if the young baronet liked Louisa, he should think him a very

fortunate man to have her permission to give her his name.

Lady Berkland was in a pretty good fidget at first; but this finishing sentence quite overset her. She told Mr. Montague, she never wished to have any thing more to say to him; her being a friend, or an enemy, to Louisa, depended upon her future conduct.

“ You shall positively, Madam, have nothing to do with Miss Mathews,” said Montague; “ your enmity, or your friendship, are alike contemptible. You drive me out of my wits—” When, walking into a second room, he fastened the door that she could not follow him, and left her to vent her passion alone.

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She rang the bell, and descended the stairs; saying, loud enough for Mr. Montague to hear—"I shall not visit this house again in a hurry."

C H A P. XXVII.

THE visits of Sir George Berkland, and Abercrombie, his friend, were often renewed during the four months Mr. Montague's family continued at Richmond; in which time, Eliza became the wife of Lord Haleborough, who had, from his first admission to her acquaintance, resolved on reforming a life of the most extravagant dissipation. His family was ancient, his fortune splendid, and his honour unimpeached. Had he been born without title or estate,
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he had probably graced whatever profession he had chosen; for his parts were uncommonly good: but, owing to the fond and foolish indulgence of a mother, who believed rank and income were the only necessary appendages to her son, she neglected every part of his education; dancing, fencing, and French, excepted. But his natural turn led him to improve that little she *had* given in the learned languages, by study and great application, till he was twenty; when, falling into the hands of needy men of fashion, they induced him to raise money to the amount of several thousands, at an exorbitant interest. The best part of this he lent to his seducing

ducing acquaintances; the remainder he lost at the gaming-table, to which he became seriously addicted: but a draft being made from the regiment of guards to which he belonged during the American war, preserved him from danger at home. While at New York, his mother died, and bequeathed the best part of her personal property, which was great, to her other son, who had *kindly* informed her of Lord Haleborough's conduct; but his uncle, Colonel Hale, who knew of his meanness, in weaning his mother's affections from her eldest son, from motives of an interested nature, altered *his* will—which conveyed every thing to young Hale—in favour of Lord Hale-

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Haleborough, whom he had wronged. By this treachery, he lost near four thousand a year, which loss he most richly merited.

At Lord Haleborough's return to his native country, which was at the time of the peace, he went to Bath; where he met the Montague family, and became attached to the amiable and elegant Eliza. It was some time after she had admitted his addresses, that she learnt his mother had disinherited him for his gaming propensities; and, trembling at the consequences of being united to a gamester, who, though abundantly rich to-day, may be a beggar to-morrow, she retracted her promise, and gave her

her dangerous lover his final dismissal. Love had taken too deep a root in his heart to make any sacrifice regretted which could obtain it's object. He took an oath never to bett or play for above ten guineas; and, as he had relinquished the pursuit on his going abroad, she trusted, that his former attachment to a gaming-table was more owing to the prevalence of great example, than to an innate love of play. His principles were good, and his notions of honour refined. Miss Montague believed, that, even were his follies more rooted than they appeared to be, she should succeed in converting him—the most dangerous persuasion a woman can cherish, but one most generally

generally adopted by the sex, in spite of a thousand examples to the contrary.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.